ADULT LEADER

A Journal of Christian Education and Church Work; with Study and Teaching Material for the Uniform (International) Lessons

Vol. IX DECEMBER, 1933 No. 12

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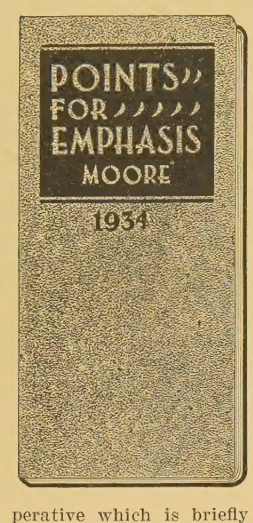

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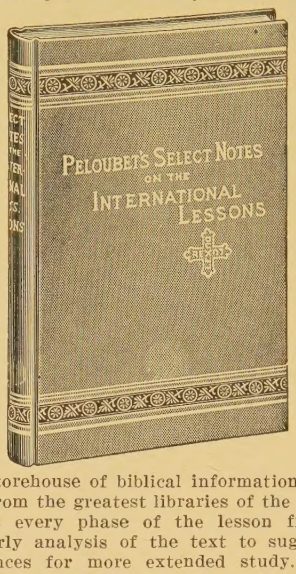

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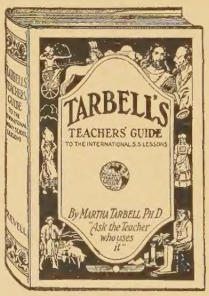

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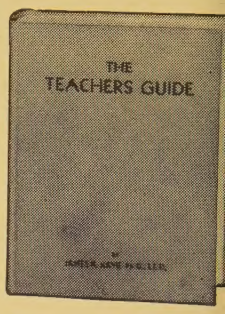

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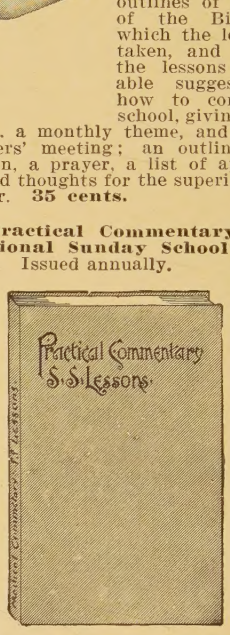

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ADULT LEADER

Vol. IX DECEMBER, 1933 Number Twelve

MILES W. SMITH
Editor-in-Chief Sunday School Publications

MITCHELL BRONK
Editor of ADULT LEADER

Published Monthly by
THE AMERICAN BAPTIST PUBLICATION SOCIETY
(*THE JUDSON PRESS*)
OWEN C. BROWN, Executive Secretary
ELVIN L. RUTH, Treasurer
HARVEY E. CRESSMAN, Business Manager
1701–1703 Chestnut Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
Boston Chicago Los Angeles
Kansas City Seattle Toronto

PRICES: Single copy, 90 cents per year; in quantities, 19 cents per quarter, 75 cents per year.

Entered as second-class matter December 7, 1917, at the post-office at Philadelphia, Pa., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Acceptance for mailing at special rate of postage provided for in Section 103, Act of October 3, 1917, authorized on July 3, 1918.
PRINTED IN U. S. A.

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Christmas Messages

The Nativity means, above everything else, salvation. Salvation is indeed the ascendant Christmas fact. The "tidings of great joy" was not that a child of destiny had been born in the city of David, but that a Saviour had been born there. Because the world is always full of people lost in sin, and lost in various other ways, is the announcement of a Saviour's birth a perpetual Merry Christmas message.

* * *

God's highest and most precious revelations do not always come—as to the shepherds—in phantasma of the starry night. The glory of his presence filled even at this hour the shed of a mean public house, where an Israelitish woman was submitting to the cross of motherhood. And, without the glory, that presence was dwelling in many a home of the Syrian land where love was being given and duty done. Much celestial music is sung to the tune of common, humdrum existence.

* * *

As Jesus did in Capernaum, so at Bethlehem that holy night God "took a little child and set him in their midst"—the midst of timeless, universal humanity. The grouping of the figures in that most famous of all paintings, Raphael's "Sistine Madonna," is significant: Mary holds aloft her child, in humble pride, but challengingly, as if she meant, "Behold! the divinest thing of all!" From the Nativity onward childhood was to take on a new importance and preciousness—because the Eternal had incarnated himself in a little child.

* * *

According to the angel's proclamation it was not only a gospel that had come to the world, but a gospel—"good tidings—*of great joy.*" We voice it in Watts' hymn, "Joy to the World, the Lord Is Come!" Why should not the world be glad at such an announcement, especially the world as we today know it? It is interesting to observe how what we term "the Christmas spirit" drives away the gloom of these short, dark December days and is an unfailing antidote for sadness, pessimism, grouchiness and bad temper.

* * *

Isn't it significant that we commonly designate those men from out of the East as the "Wise-men"? Wise indeed is the man who goes seeking the Christ. "Hitch your wagon to a star," said Emerson. Yes, but to that star of Bethlehem that still sparkles in God's heavens, beckoning, inviting, guiding. Hasten where it leads; to greet the Saviour of mankind; to do him your heartiest homage; to offer him your richest treasures of service and love.

* * *

It belonged to the wisdom of the "Wise-men" that they did not let the meanness of his surroundings disguise for them the actual royalty, the kingly destiny, of the manger-cradled babe at Bethlehem. They may have expected to find him in a palace, a princeling wrapped in cloth of gold; but anyhow, they possessed enough of the discernment of faith and of confidence in the star-leading of God to enable them to recognize in that peasant child wrapped in coarse linen and lying in the stable of a caravansary the king whom they were expecting to lead them out of their spiritual darkness and desperation. It is said that Pope Gregory the Great kept a little ivory cradle, containing a figure of the Christ-Child, standing on his desk—to keep him lowly minded. God's handful is sometimes larger than the biggest heap, his apparently trivial gift more precious than all the gold of the Celestial City's pavements, his still small voice more impressive than the loudest thunder, and his peace gladder than the shout of joy.

* * *

From out his war-shaken age the prophet Isaiah had foreseen the Christ Messiah as a Prince of Peace (Isa. 9:6). So this divine, hyacinthine child, tranquilly sleeping there in the manger, was to be a bringer of peace to the world—when and where men would! ("*among men who please him,*" Mrs. Montgomery translates). For those who displease him—by living contrary to his will—discord, confusion, warring,

national and racial strife, will continue: "fightings within and fears without." If God came into the world as a baby, his advent must naturally be peace-bringing. Not with the noise of arms and threats of force did our King arrive; not by might and power does he rule, but by "gentleness and peace, and mild humility." "A little child shall lead them." The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is a Lamb!

* * *

There is a story that gives the origin of that Christmas viand par excellence, mince pie. It is said that the Emperor Rudolph I once paid a state visit to Strassburg at Christmastime. Every family in the city was ordered to prepare some delectable dish for their ruler's Christmas dinner, which was to be served in an elaborate banquet. Now there was a widow in the city who was pitiably poor, but very devoted to her sovereign. She had nought to bake with nor to buy with; so in her desperation she emptied all her pots, jars and boxes into one incongruous mess; baked it in a neighbor's oven; and brought it to the banquet hall. The emperor noticed its strange but pleasing smell, tasted it, and liked it best of all the victuals that loaded the table. So that kind of pie became a famous dish. The shepherds had no gold, frankincense or myrrh in their wallets, but they gave what they could, glory and praise to God for what he was doing for the world in the babe they found in the manger at Bethlehem.

* * *

Had those shepherds been drowsing through their appointed watches, as doubtless many a Judean shepherd was doing that night, they would have missed the angelic splendor and message. Vision and vigil always go together. If in the Christian life you keep shutting your eyes to duty, obligation, and vow, rare will be your visions of Christ. We think of Longfellow's "Legend Beautiful": "Hadst thou stayed I must have fled."

* * *

This was a certain boy's first association of giving with Christmas, his earliest teaching that love gives.

Who was the Santa Claus so much talked about? He did not know; but anyhow one of his little stockings had been hung all ready for the mysterious gift-bringer's midnight visit about which the story-books had so much to say. The old-fashioned house had a fireplace, opening into a chimney spacious enough for even plump Santa's descent. To be sure, that fireplace was covered with a fire-board, but we children had assured ourselves that it could easily be pushed aside. The boy had never awakened so early as he did that Christmas morning. The stairs and the oilcloth on the long hall chilled his bare feet. But his prowling in the early morning's dusk was not in vain; the gift-giver had been there; the stocking bulged with candy and nuts that had not been gathered from our New York State trees, and a wooden flageolet, painted in red and gold, and a captivating little Noah's Ark. (This was before the day of costly—extravagant—Christmas presents for children!) Back in bed under the warm blankets and quilts, the small boy began trying again to clear up the mystery of Santa Claus. Some of his playmates had used instead the designation Kris Kringle. That sounded like "Christ King." And Christmas contained the word Christ. Could Santa Claus be the same as Christ, the same as God? If so, then it was true that Christ likes children—as we had been told that Santa Claus does—and brings them nice things. Yes, I think that the six-year-old boy was being taught in that word Christmas, and in that mysterious personality Santa Claus and in the time-honored practice of Christmas giving something of the great truth of John 3:16—"so loved that he gave." The dawning of it in his child mind was furthered, moreover, by a persisting suspicion that his mother and father, who, of course loved him, were in some inexplicable way bound up in the personality of Santa Claus.

* * *

There is an old fancy that nature signalized the coming to the world of God's Son by marvelously reviving and rebeautifying herself. The withered grass will have taken on new greenness, the bare trees put forth an untimely foliage, and the dead flowers burst into out-of-season bloom that night. Is it an attempt to poetize the change that the Nativity effected in the life of humanity? However modest an event in the common course of days, it was historically and sempiternally a cataclysmic, revolutionary break of time, for nothing thereafter could be as it had been before. In the birth at Bethlehem the Eternal is declaring, "Old things are passed away; behold all things are become new!" So B. C. and A. D. are as wide apart as Alpha and Omega.

* * *

It was an Incarnation as well as a Nativity. The birth of Jesus was not a lightning-flash, but the dawning of a fixed star. A birth has significance only as it is the prophecy of life to follow. I do not see how anyone can find fullest joy in the Christmas festival who looks upon the birth at Bethlehem as a single completed event; but when you make it the first link of a golden chain of divine grace with which humanity is drawn to God and bound about his throne, then "December 25" may well be illuminated with the traditional Christmas colors on our calendars: warm red, or refreshing green, or shining gold. A Christ Jesus born into the world abidingly to live and love and save; "Emmanuel his name shall be called."

Paul in Rome

By John Snape, D. D.
Pastor Temple Baptist Church, Los Angeles, Calif.

The Bay of Naples is one of the loveliest bodies of ıter in the world. In the curving crescent of its rbor vessels from all parts of the world ride at chor, while Vesuvius, cloud-capped by day and fire-)wned by night, frowns menacingly four thousand et above its surface.

Not far away on the beautiful fifteen miles coast is ıteoli (now called Puzzuoli) where Paul landed on ; way to Rome. Here, also, is lovely Sorrento; re Amalfi, once the center of a proud and powerful)ublic that sent out colonies to Africa and Asia, but w a manufacturing center for soap and macaroni d a rendezvous for beggars; here Capri, with its rgeous blue grotto, once the home of Emperor Augus-s; here Nisida, to whose wave-washed shores Brutus me after the death of Cæsar to say farewell to Portia; re Posilipo, where Cicero and Virgil lived, and where latter is buried; here Naples, with its Square, its rmer royal palace, its famous quay of Santa Lucia, d its narrow streets through which men, women, ldren, goats, cows, and donkeys push their restless y; here Pompeii, with its excavated streets, temples, phitheaters, market-places, marvelous mosaics, and burned and bony skeletons of men who in the ddle of a cloudless day—November 5, A. D. 79—re caught in the eruption of Vesuvius, smothered th sulphurous fumes, and buried beneath dust and ies.

Three things characterized the Pompeian period, and same three characterize our day: luxury, impurity, ıtality. Let America take warning. The history of ions shows that nations go down when the under-nings of morality give way. The history of the wnfall of nations is the history of a fall-down in rals. America's light, like the light of ancient Rome, l die down and out unless it is kept glowing and rious by downright fidelity to the simple faith that quered the Roman Empire and gave the world a v bent toward God.

And so I came to Rome. But as I came within sight the Eternal City, I did not, like Luther on his first it, fall on my knees and cry, "Hail, blessed Rome, ice blessed with the blood of martyrs!" for I had a ling that, like Luther, my "strong sight would be much for my strong credence."

Well, I saw Rome—the Colosseum, Saint Peter's thedral, the Vatican, the Sistine Chapel, the Golden use of Nero, the Pantheon, the Catacombs—and t before leaving Rome for Florence I turned away m all the pomp and form, all the sculpture and painting, all the mosaic and marble, all the glitter and gorgeousness, all the art and architecture, and worshiped at the American Methodist Church; and later called on the pastor of a little Baptist church—the Rev. Francesco Prisinzano. He is not only pastor of a church, but professor of homiletics and practical theology in a seminary. There are four Baptist churches in Rome, with a total membership of three hundred fifty.

I felt, after meeting that heroic Baptist minister and having seen something of the work that is being done there in the name of Christ, without fuss or feathers, without pomp or pageantry, without ribbons or royalty, as if a breath has passed across my face, a breath of pure and vital Christianity—whereas for several days I had breathed the musty air of formalistic religion.

There are at present three kings in Italy: the pope, the king, and Mussolini. The pope is a big king ruling over a little kingdom of, perhaps, two thousand acres. Papal passports are now issued and accepted just like passports from any other country.

The king is amiable and respected—and dominated. The king is king in Italy, and must give sanction to the premier's proposals before they become effective—but sanction is always given!

Mussolini is a diplomat, a dictator, an autocrat, an atheist, but a lover of Italy, and its real king. The pope gets along well with Mussolini, but it is a surface cordiality. Underneath there is mutual distrust. The pope resents the fact that a man with such power as Mussolini has is not in the Church. The pope is pope, and the king is king, but Mussolini is—Mussolini.

What religious Rome needs today is—religion. What she needed when Paul went to Rome she needs now. Thank God for the Methodists and Presbyterians and Waldensians and Baptists, who in this city of a million souls hold aloft the torch of true faith where once the great apostle of the Gentiles preached the kingdom of God, taught the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ, and made converts even among the members of Cæsar's household.

Let it be known that in Paul's day it required courage of a high order to go to Rome. Paul did not go as a tourist, as I did; he went as a missionary-prisoner. He was anxious to go to Rome. He was God's ambassador, but an ambassador in chains. His chains became manifest in all the prætorium.

It required physical courage, for men were ready to inflict violence on any who dared defend the hated name. It required intellectual courage; for philosophers and lawyers were ready with sophistical argu-

ments to overthrow the plain statements of the gospel. It required moral courage to preach the truth that a despised and crucified Nazarene was the Messiah of the Jews and the Saviour of the world. But he was not ashamed. Many a man who can face the shells of enemies in the time of war, lacks the moral courage to face the laughter of comrades for the honor of the Prince of Peace. Paul was neither afraid of danger nor ashamed of scorn.

They might chain his hands, but never his intrepid spirit. He was a rabbi, a scholar, and a Roman. As a rabbi, confessing Christ, he at the same time confessed the inadequacy of Judaism to fit and fill the need of the human heart. As a scholar he would have to abandon the fascinations of philosophy and the eloquence of poetry, and confine himself largely to his own experience on the Damascus road. As a Roman he waived all political aspirations, but he was not ashamed.

To a Roman, religion was a philosophy. He had no place for religion as a way of life. In habit, Rome was immoral, corrupt, and did not want to be disturbed. It prided itself on its pomp and power. But as Pa had preached the gospel in Athens, the city of Plato ar Socrates, and was not afraid, so he will preach it Rome, the city of Cicero and Seneca.

Paul was stoned at Lystra, ignored at Corint mocked at Athens, mobbed at Ephesus, doubted Jerusalem, but he was not ashamed at Rome. "I mu see Rome also"—that was the dynamic that drove hi on toward Rome and death. "Whensoever I take m journey into Spain" (the journey that he never took —that was his urge and enticement to the end.

And why should any man be ashamed of the gosp of Christ? When we consider that scientists like New ton and Herschel, psychologists like Hyslop and Jame poets like Tennyson and Browning, business men lik Wanamaker and Heinz, philanthropists like Colga and Rockefeller, statesmen like Gladstone and Lincol and soldiers like Gordon and Foch acknowledge th sway of the Nazarene in their lives, men of meane moral and intellectual proportions should be slow t confess their shame at identification with his name.

Improving Your Teaching

By Frank M. McKibben [1]

XII. HOW DO LEADERS GROW?

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"Just what do you mean by 'grow'?" a teacher inquired of a discussion leader. "I've always assumed that I was undergoing some kind of development. Do you mean that there are definite goals of growth I should have in mind and that there are ways of measuring development?"

Can Growth Be Guided?

"I mean just that," replied the leader. "And it is such a vital matter that we should not simply guess or assume that it is occurring. We should seek to know the direction our growth should take, along what lines we need development, and we should endeavor to understand how we may promote growth along these lines. It has been said repeatedly that the development of our pupils is the main concern of our teaching. And yet we frequently fail to take time or make the effort to study carefully the matter of our own development. Growth of some kind must be occurring all the time. It is the nature of the Christian religion that it demands constant growth. When growth ceases, disintegration and spiritual stagnation begin. The very natur of the task in which we are engaged demands that w grow. We are dealing with growing life. We canno be interpreters or sharers of life unless we ourselve are experiencing and achieving. We dare not attemp to live and teach out of past experiences and achieve ments alone. Religious leadership requires that ther be a constant freshness and newness about our living There are many kinds of growth that should be con sidered, only a few of which can be treated here."

Are You Growing in Understanding and Skill

Those who have been considering these discussion from month to month have been attempting just thi kind of growth. The effort to improve your teachin is simply an effort to come to a better understandin of the various factors that contribute to effective lead ership and to acquire greater mastery of the skills in volved in teaching. It is for this reason that you hav studied the nature of teaching, the laws of learning the objectives, the meaning of the curriculum, and th various methods of group leadership. These are som of the basic understandings the growing teacher wi ever seek the better to master. They are absolutel essential to the development of real leadership.

[1] This concludes the series of twelve articles, which we have published during 1933. The writer is professor of religious education in Northwestern University, Evanston, Ill., having been previously head of the department of religious education in the University of Pittsburgh. He is the author of one of the best-known books in his specialty, *Improving Religious Education Through Supervision.*

Therefore, the growing teacher will inquire from ne to time regarding his increasing understanding of ese matters. He will ask himself such questions as, m I gaining a better appreciation of the true nature of aching? Is my observation of and experience with pils increasing my understanding of their needs and e ways in which they develop? Am I increasingly le to utilize the laws of learning in my class work? hat evidence have I that my objectives are being ieved? To what extent do I accomplish what I set t to do? How often and why do I fail? Have I en able to make better use of my course of study? st what improvement have I made during the last w Sundays? Am I overcoming some of my difficul- s in class or worship leadership? Am I increasingly le to evaluate growth on the part of my pupils? ese and many other questions suggest the kind of f-study a teacher might well engage in. Well-trained d highly effective leaders will uniformly testify to e fact that it is only thus that they have been able gain understanding.

Skills can be acquired, of course, only through prac- e. Guidance, however, may be secured from many rces by one who seeks mastery of leadership technics. attempting to become skilful it is highly important t each leader determine upon certain skills that he sires most to possess and then steadily and faithfully ive to develop them. These will be selected from a le range of necessary skills—skill in lesson prepara- n, in the various teaching technics such as story- ing and discussion leadership, in assignment of ivity, in creating *esprit de corps* in a class, in de- oping a worship spirit within a group, in directing jects, in discovering and using resource material, in ndling routine matters, in making individual contacts h pupils, and a host of other skills associated with various kinds of group leadership.

Each of these skills may be analyzed into the various ailed elements and activities for purposes of study, ervation, and practice. These detailed elements may organized into a simple rating scale by means of ich a leader may evaluate his progress. These skills l need to be checked time and again by the leader, l with each inquiry an effort will need to be made to over in what particulars they are not being acquired. sistent study and practice will usually result in in- asing mastery of the most-desired teaching skills.

Is Your Personality Growing?

The achievement of a well-developed, integrated, and ctioning personality is one of the chief goals of life. sonality is not inherited. It is true that inheritance ys a distinct part in it. But personality is largely a tter of growth. It is not developed easily or in a f time, nor is it ever completed. One should always experiencing growth of some kind. What the teacher should be concerned about is the nature and direction of this development. While we should not engage in unwholesome introspection, we should study our own lives to seek to bring about the finest possible development. It should not be a haphazard, hit-and-miss growth. Modern psychology and pedagogy provide considerable help to the individual who seeks seriously to enrich his personal life. Personality is a compound of many elements, and only a few of them can be mentioned here.

The teacher's basic attitudes have a profound influence upon his own and other personalities, his attitudes toward life in general, toward others, toward his work. Attitudes of cheerfulness, hopefulness, courage, loyalty, reverence, earnestness, faithfulness, and so forth, are highly important and are the result of careful cultivation. Similar to these are the dispositions that characterize the individual—dispositions to be helpful, cooperative, kind, interested, self-effacing, open-minded, tactful, and dependable. These attitudes and dispositions are frequently referred to as traits of character. They are very numerous, as any personal rating scale shows, and may be made the object of thoughtful cultivation on the part of teachers. Any leader who systematically passes judgment upon himself with respect to these various personality traits, and then faithfully seeks to cultivate those in which he finds himself wanting, will undoubtedly secure gratifying results. The assistance of capable supervisors and true friends may profitably be sought.

It is highly important, of course, that all of these complex elements be integrated into unity. One may be said to be achieving an integrated personality who is freed from internal disturbance, conflict, and confusion, and whose capabilities and powers are being fully released. Leaders in religious education should seek by all means to free themselves from whatever disrupts personality. It may be a false center of loyalty or a bitter struggle between conflicting loyalties, selfishness, sin, a sense of superiority or inferiority, physical handicaps, or a lack of training or experience. Within the Christianity which we teach, properly interpreted and practised, is to be found, undoubtedly, the most wholesome assistance the average individual may secure in achieving an integrated and winsome personality and in realizing and expressing all of one's capabilities and powers. It is a sad comment upon the teacher of such a dynamic religion if its beauty and power do not find expression in his own life.

Is Your Own Religious Life Being Enriched?

The world in which we live is one of change, complexity, and confusion. New discoveries, new inventions, and new interpretations of life mark each succeeding decade. Above all, it is an age dominated by the scientific spirit and method. The spirit of inquiry

is abroad. Questions are being raised about every aspect of life. No forms of thought, traditions, or sacred practices can escape this spirit of critical investigation. Religious belief and practice have felt the full force of the scientific spirit in recent years. Creeds centuries old and worship practices hoary with age are being critically reexamined to discover if they are rational and effective for modern life. It is inevitable that every Christian should be forced in a way to rethink his own religious beliefs in the light of modern knowledge and experience. "What may I believe and teach to the rising generation?" is a question that many teachers have been compelled to face in their work.

Every teacher of the Christian religion is under the necessity of striving to clarify his own understanding of such fundamentals of religious faith, in order first to have a strong, unshakable faith for himself, and, second, to be able to interpret to growing youth a body of religious belief which is not contradictory to reason and proved knowledge. This includes our interpretation of the Bible, the terms God, Jesus, sin, salvation, immortality, the kingdom of God, and such other concepts as we deem important in the religious training of youth.

Furthermore, there are problems faced today in the realm of social attitudes, philosophy, and practices. Every thinking person is compelled to face and deal with tension points in our present social order. The times are sadly out of joint. So much of our economic and world life is thoroughly out of harmony with the teachings and spirit of Jesus. For the sake of one's own peace of mind and personal action, one is compelled to try to reach some kind of a satisfying position with respect to the burning social and industrial issues of the day. But those who deal with growing youth face the additional challenge of so understanding these issues that they may be interpreted to youth in a manner harmonious with the kingdom-of-God concept of life. What attitude to take toward capitalism, socialism, communism, toward the profit motive, toward the concentration of wealth in the hands of the few, toward the growing spirit of nationalism, and toward the acute problems in the realm of interracial and international life, constitutes a real question to the teacher of religion today. These questions cannot be escaped in the classroom except by the superficial teacher.

We are not suggesting that teachers in our church schools over the country should be expected to have final solutions to all these questions and problems. What we are suggesting is that the teacher of religion should be alert to these great issues in current life, and be ever growing in his understanding of their various aspects and in his ability to deal with them as they arise in his teaching program. Religious nurture will increasingly lack vitality and helpfulness for all ages in our church schools, if these matters of religious faith and social attitude and action are not dealt with courageously.

Is Your Ability to Share Life Increasing?

The newer emphases in curriculum building are ca ing for new methods. If religious nurture is primari the matter of enriching and directing the experience the learner, then the major technic demanded of tl mature leader is that of the ability to share his ow experience and life. This is something quite differe from the mere interpretation of something in a boo or on a page. If we are to explore experience and e rich life, we as teachers must experience deeply ar live richly, else we cannot enter into the experiences our pupils or we will have little of life to share wi them. Pupils of a certain teacher were frequent heard to comment on her in the following terms: "Sl is a good teacher in the class session, but she shar her life with us so abundantly outside the classroo Our lives are richer for having had these contacts wi her." Such a teacher knows how to share her life.

To share life and experience with others one mu know others and love them. He must be willing take the time necessary to cultivate friendship and stimulate confidence. One must be willing, whenev his spirit is led to do so, to share his intimate thought problems, and aspirations with others. He must a quire the ability to see life through the experiences ar eyes of others. Jesus seemed to have acquired th ability to an unusual degree. And one of the secrets his mastery as a teacher was just this disposition ar ability to let others into his life—to share his all th he thought, felt, and did with those he loved.

A Tribute to Religious Education in China

Dr. D. Willard Lyon, well-known Y. M. C. A. leade has recently returned from a visit to China. After close observation of the activities of the National Cor mittee for Christian Religious Education in China, has made the following statement:

"With exceedingly limited financial resources th committee has succeeded during the year and a half th it has been functioning in producing a number of teac ing texts based on Chinese experience and has pr moted conferences and institutes which have stimulate a wide interest in improved methods of religious teac ing. A Religious Education Fellowship has bee formed with a membership which has grown to fo hundred, including both Chinese and missionary wor ers in many parts of China, which is proving a valuab agency for the exchange of experience and for plannir and praying for the work. . .

"I know of no single piece of Christian work China today which is producing better results on a lo expenditure of funds than that which is being so su cessfully carried on by the secretaries, committee, ar volunteer service of friends of the National Committ for Christian Religious Education in China."

At the Inn

A CHRISTMAS PRESENTATION IN ONE ACT

By Mary Russell

PLACE. Courtyard of an inn in Bethlehem.

TIME. The night of the Nativity.

CHARACTERS. JOEL, the inn-keeper. RACHEL, wife of JOEL. JOSEPH. MARY. ASA, a shepherd of middle age. JACOB, LEVI, EMEL, shepherds, with no speaking parts. DAVID, a young shepherd, a singer, son of JOEL. THREE MAGI. A chorus, off-stage.

(*Directions are given from point of view of players.*)

COSTUMES. *The familiar dress of the period is used. Joel, Rachel and Joseph wear typical Hebrew garments of time of Christ. Mary wears a long full dress of blue with a white head-dress draped gracefully over her head and falling over shoulders and gown. The shepherds wear characteristic costumes of dark, rough material with head-dresses reaching to shoulders. Asa and David wear brighter head-coverings than the others. Asa wears a mantle but David does not, thus leaving his hands free to manipulate the lyre. The Magi, in contrast to the shepherds, are dressed in rich fabrics of bright colors with elaborate head-dresses. Each carries a small ornamental box or vase. David's lyre may be fashioned from cardboard and gilded.*

LIGHTING. *The lighting is simple. Throughout the scene the stage is dimly lighted to suggest night. A spot is thrown on Rachel, on Asa and on David as indicated in text. Near close of scene, when door of stable is opened, the space within is lighted by blue floods (see text) from sides, with soft amber above and white light from within manger, which occupies center of space.*

SETTING. *A background of brown paper marked off with gray lines suggests the stone wall of the inn. Vines or greens may be used to indicate door, left. A wide step, about a foot high, is in front of door. Shrubs and plants complete the effect of the courtyard. Two panel screens, four by six feet, covered with brown paper, set at rear, right, form the stable. A curtain of burlap, or movable screen, covers the entrance to stable which faces front. The stable must be so placed that persons may enter it from the right wings without being seen by audience. The characters leave stage and then later enter stable from wings.*

MUSIC. *Familiar Christmas music has been selected. Whenever possible the two selections from the "Messiah" should be sung, as they will add decidedly to the impressiveness of the presentation. If there is no choir to render the selections the hymns suggested in text may be substituted.*

SCENE. *In the courtyard of an inn.*

(*Soft instrumental music precedes the action and continues until entrance of* RACHEL. JOEL *enters, left, goes slowly toward center, stops, looks back, waits. After a moment he hurries toward entrance, left, as* RACHEL *enters.*)

JOEL (*with concern*). Where did you put them?

RACHEL. In our room; there was no other place. Every room is full, every bed taken, even the floor is covered with sleeping persons.

JOEL. It is well. We can sleep in the stable.

RACHEL (*nodding head in agreement*). We can be comfortable there; the straw is clean, the place is warm.

JOEL. This is a good night for us, Rachel; the inn is full.

RACHEL. Full to overflowing.

JOEL. And will be for some days. (*Rubs hands together in glee.*) It will bring us much money.

RACHEL. I do not like to take money from the hardships of our people. Some of these travelers have come from great distances to be taxed in the city of their fathers. Many of them can ill afford the expense.

JOEL. True, but now that they are here they must be cared for. Where could they find a better place than our inn? And their money will enable us to finish paying for the parcel of land we bought for David, our son.

RACHEL. How happy David will be! He likes the hills, the fields, and his sheep.

JOEL. He is like his forefathers who were shepherds and landowners.

RACHEL. And like the king whose name he bears, for not only does he tend the sheep but he plays the harp and sings sweet songs.

JOEL. He is a dreamer. It is well that our other son, Nathan, has an eye to business. He will carry on this inn when I am gathered to my fathers.

RACHEL. Speak not of that time; you have many years yet.

JOEL. Even so, a father should plan for his sons.

RACHEL (*wistfully*). Would that I had a daughter for whom to plan!

JOEL (*with compassion*). Ever has your heart yearned for that daughter who did not come to us.

RACHEL. Every woman desires a little girl.

JOEL. But you have two sons, boys of whom any woman should be proud.

RACHEL. And I am proud of them! In all Bethlehem, aye, in all Judea, there are no finer lads than my sons! But I wanted a daughter too, a girl to remain in the home with me while the boys were away with you.

JOEL. But in time she would have married and left you.

RACHEL. Even so, I should not have lost her, for when little ones came to her she would need her mother. I could have held her children. (*Gazes out into space as though dreaming.*)

JOEL (*lifting head in listening attitude and looking off to left. Sounds and low voices off-stage*). More travelers and we have no room for them! (*Gesture of dismay.*) Money lost!

(JOSEPH *and* MARY *enter, left,* MARY *leaning heavily on* JOSEPH, *who tenderly supports her.*)

RACHEL (*in low voice*). How fair she is! How weary!

JOSEPH. Are you the keeper of the inn?

JOEL. I am the keeper, but the inn is full. There is no room left.

JOSEPH. Any place will serve, however small, so it be near.

JOEL. But I have no room. Every space is taken. Even now did my wife yield up our room to strangers, and we must spend this night in yonder stable with the animals.

RACHEL (*softly, gazing at* MARY). Would that I had waited awhile!

JOSEPH (*looking at* MARY). The woman can go no farther. Find a place for her and I will pay you well.

JOEL (*impatient*). But I tell you there is no room, not even a bed or place on the floor! Have you no relatives in Bethlehem, no one who would take you in?

JOSEPH. No one, and we must find shelter at once.

MARY. Let us go on, Joseph. Somewhere a door will open to us, someone will take us in. (*Her head falls forward, she staggers.*)

RACHEL (*stepping quickly to* MARY). You are ill. (*Puts arms about* MARY. MARY *relaxes, rests head on* RACHEL, *smiles at her.*)

MARY. So weary I am! My hour has come. (*Looks longingly up at* RACHEL.) If only I might stay with you!

RACHEL (*to Joel*). She cannot go on; she is ill. Is there no place where we can care for her?

JOEL (*with helpless gesture*). You know that the inn is full. It may be that Deborah, who lives beyond the well, may yet have a room. She said she would take a few persons.

JOSEPH. Tell me where she lives and we will go there with all haste, for already the night is upon us, and Mary is weary, nigh unto death. All day has she traveled by donkey-back.

RACHEL. She can go no farther, not even on the donkey.

JOEL (*hesitating*). There is the stable.

RACHEL. It is a humble place for so sweet a woman, but it will be better than journeying to Deborah's.

MARY. And you will be there?

RACHEL. I shall be there, for we have no other place in which to spend the night.

MARY. Then gladly will I remain here . . . with you.

RACHEL (*joyfully, her gaze on* MARY). I will take care of you; I will do for you all that a mother would.

MARY (*smiling at* RACHEL). With you I shall not be afraid. (*To* JOSEPH.) Must I mount that donkey again?

RACHEL. There is no need. 'Tis but a step to the stable. I will help you. (*They leave stage, right,* MARY *supported by* JOSEPH *and* RACHEL.)

JOEL (*after others have passed from sight*). Still they come! Had I known how many, I would have pulled down the walls and made more rooms. (*Walks back and forth.*) Customers turned away . . . money lost. Well, it cannot be helped now, but if there is another taxing, I will be ready for more trade. (*Yawns, stretches arms.*) Oh, I am weary! The day has been long and the demands heavy. And now my bed is taken by another! (*Walks right a few steps, stops.*) Others may come; I will not go to the stable yet. (*Sits on step, leans back, sleeps. Lights dimmed. Chorus, off-stage, sings, "O Thou that Tellest Good Tidings to Zion," from the "Messiah"; or the first and second stanzas of "O Little Town of Bethlehem."*)

(*After music has completely died away,* RACHEL *enters, right, hurries to* JOEL, *shakes him by the arm.*)

RACHEL. Joel, Joel, rouse yourself.

JOEL (*stirs, opens eyes, sits up*). What is it, more guests?

RACHEL. Such news I have! Indeed, another has come—a tiny guest.

JOEL. But there is no room!

RACHEL. But this newcomer has found room—warmth, shelter and love—in his mother's arms.

JOEL (*amazed*). In his mother's arms? (*Rises to feet.*) What do you mean?

RACHEL (*spot on* RACHEL). The young woman who was here an hour ago is now a mother; her son was born in our stable. I bathed him and laid him in his mother's arms; even as I would had she been my own daughter. She smiled and thanked me. So sweet she is, so beautiful, so dear, that my heart overflows with love for her. I wish I might keep her near me. (*In more confidential tone.*) Joel, her face shone as with a holy light when I gave her the child and (*hesitates*), and it seemed to me that the babe was wrapped in a golden radiance. Never have I seen so fair a mother or so wonderful a babe!

JOEL (*in awed tone*). Your face is shining as though touched with light. 'Tis your love for children; always are you most beautiful when one is in your arms. But tonight (*pauses*), tonight you are lovelier than ever before. Truly he must be a wonderful child!

RACHEL. He is. (*In exaltation.*) As I held him to my breast a strange joy surged through me, filling my soul with gladness. When I had given the child to his mother I wanted to fall on my knees and render thanks unto God for the birth of this babe. Never shall I forget this night; it is as though a daughter of mine had come home and presented her child to me. Joel, there is something strange about this, something I cannot explain.

JOEL (*patting her gently on the arm*). Calm yourself, Rachel; you are excited and weary. The day has been long and difficult; you should rest.

RACHEL (*still in mood of exaltation*). I am not weary; I do not need rest. (*Softly.*) I could not sleep this night for very happiness. One like unto a daughter has come to me, has needed me, and has permitted me to minister unto her, and to her son. Let us walk awhile in the garden that I may tell you more of this wonderful night. (*Extends her hand to* JOEL *and speaks in lighter vein. Spot off.*) Surely you are not too weary for that, for already you have had a measure of rest. Did I not find you sleeping when I returned? (*They move slowly toward left,* RACHEL *leading. As they approach the exit,* RACHEL *stops. Murmur of voices off-stage, left.*)

JOEL (*peering over* RACHEL'S *shoulder*). More visitors? Oh, it grieves me to turn them away! (*Two shepherds enter.*) Why, they are shepherds!

RACHEL. Asa, Jacob (LEVI, SEMEL *and* DAVID *enter*), and David. What does this mean?

JOEL. Why are you here? Why have you left your flocks and come to the city at this hour?

ASA (*impressive tone*). To see the child.

DAVID (*pressing forward*). Where is he? In the inn?

RACHEL. How did you learn of the babe?

JOEL (*amazed*). Why leave your flocks to see a strange babe when children are born every day in Bethlehem?

DAVID (*excited*). Then he is here?

RACHEL. What know you of this babe, my son? 'Twas but an hour or so ago that he was born of Mary, a stranger come from Nazareth. Now he lies yonder (*indicates stable*) in a manger.

ASA (*emphatically*). It is he! (*Turning to shepherds.*) Did not the angels say we should find him lying in a manger?

RACHEL (*awed*). Angels?

JOEL (*impatient*). Angels? What talk is this?

ASA. Strange things have happened this night. (*He stands facing audience, the other shepherds back of him, left.* RACHEL *and* JOEL, *right, stand a little in front of* ASA, *with their backs turned part way on audience. Care should be taken to have the group form an attractive stage picture. Spot-light on* ASA.) As we lay in the field, keeping watch over our flocks, lo, an angel of the Lord appeared unto us, and the glory of the Lord shone round about; and we were sore afraid. (*Other shepherds nod their heads in agreement.*) But the angel said, Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. (RACHEL *clasps hands to her breast and listens all enraptured.*) And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling-clothes, lying in a manger.

RACHEL (*grasps* JOEL *by the arm and speaks just above a whisper*). Joel!

ASA. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will to men. (*Spot off* ASA *and on* DAVID.)

DAVID. Like unto this was their song. (*In his hand he holds a lyre, or its imitation, which he appears to play as though*

accompanying himself. He sings the solo, "And suddenly there was with the angel," and is joined by a choir, off-stage, in the chorus, "Glory to God in the Highest," from the "Messiah." If preferred, the hymn, "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear," may be sung instead of the selections from the "Messiah.")

ASA. So it was they sang; then vanished from our sight, leaving us alone with our sheep as before. At first we were too frightened to speak, but when we had become accustomed to the stillness and realized that we were alone, we all were eager to tell that which we had seen and heard. Then we arose and came with all haste to Bethlehem to see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us. For surely it is Israel's King who has come!

DAVID. Where is he, this child who is born King of the Jews?

JOEL (*shaking his head*). I know not. This babe of whom we spoke is no king, but the son of humble folk.

RACHEL. But such a wonderful babe, and so beautiful a mother! (*Turns toward* JOEL, *her face alight with a new thought.*) Could it be he? Remember how I said his face did shine as with a heavenly light and how my heart sang for joy when I held him in my arms?

JOEL (*shaking head unconvinced*). 'Twas but the mother love within your soul that made you see him so.

RACHEL. Nay, it was more.

ASA. Let us go and see the child, for in truth the angel did say, Ye shall find him lying in a manger.

RACHEL (*eagerly*). Come, I will lead you to him. (*Leaves stage, right, shepherds following with* ASA *leading;* DAVID *last.*)

DAVID (*passes father, pauses and returns to him*). It was even as Asa has told you. But how came he to be born in the stable?

JOEL. There was no room in the inn. Every bed is taken. I was sending the man and his wife to Deborah, but the woman was too ill to go that far, so your mother took her into the stable.

DAVID (*looking into space*). It is he, the long-promised King! (*Goes out, right.*)

JOEL (*pacing back and forth*). If it should be! Born in a stable! Oh, if there had only been room in the inn what glory would now be mine, but (*pauses, shakes head in regret*) Israel's King born in a stable! I am undone. (*Sits down, buries head in his arms, overcome by shame and regret.*)

CHORUS (*off-stage*). First and second stanzas of "There's a Song in the Air."

RACHEL (*after music had ceased, entering from right*). Joel, Joel, it is he, that is born King of the Jews! Come and worship him.

JOEL (*in agony of self-reproach*). I am unworthy. That I should have refused him room; that I should have sent Israel's King to a stable!

RACHEL. But you did not know. And what else could you have done? The inn was full.

JOEL (*rising to his feet and speaking emphatically*). For a king I would have made room! I would have turned others from the place and given him the inn.

RACHEL. One so sweet and gentle as Mary would not have had it so.

JOEL. But a King in a stable.

RACHEL (*thoughtfully*). Strange, I thought not of the stable while I was there; I saw only the child and his mother. (*Sound of steps, persons moving off-stage.*)

FIRST OF THE MAGI (*off-stage*). He must be here.

JOEL. What, others coming? (*Peers off left.*)

RACHEL. More shepherds?

(MAGI *enter.*)

JOEL (*to* RACHEL). Not shepherds, not even Jews. Strangers from distant lands. (*Approaches* MAGI.) You come seeking shelter?

FIRST OF THE MAGI. We come seeking a King.

SECOND OF THE MAGI. A long way have we come, led by a star.

JOEL (*in surprise*). A star?

SECOND OF THE MAGI. Even so. We are Wise-men from the East, familiar with the heavens and their signs. Some weeks ago a new star shone forth, one that foretold the birth of a king. It grew in brightness and began to move. We followed it; over mountains and plains, across sandy deserts and strange lands it led us, even to this place. Now for the space of several hours it has ceased to move but remains over this house, shining with great brilliance. That, we believe, signifies that the child has been born and lies within these walls.

JOEL. He is in the stable yonder (*indicates right*). Already shepherds have come from the fields, declaring that an angel told them of the child. He lies within the stable (*hesitates*) in a manger.

SECOND OF THE MAGI. Let us go and worship him and present our gifts.

RACHEL. I will lead you to him.

JOEL (*confused*). But . . . (*Turns to* RACHEL *and speaks in a low voice.*) These men are like kings. Behold the richness of their attire, see the gifts they bear; surely you would not take them into a stable.

RACHEL. But they wish to see the young child.

JOEL. Could you not bring him here?

RACHEL. Into the night? Nay, those who truly seek him will gladly go where he is. (*To* MAGI.) Come with me; I will take you to the King. (*Goes out, right, followed by three* MAGI. JOEL *stands looking off right while chorus, off-stage, sings first and fifth stanzas of "We Three Kings of Orient Are." As music ends,* DAVID *enters, right.*)

DAVID (*hurrying to* JOEL). He is indeed the child of whom the angels sang. His eyes are filled with a holy light and his face shines with a glory not of earth. Come and see for yourself.

JOEL. I am unworthy to enter his presence. I shall be forever accursed, for I sent Israel's King to a stable.

DAVID. He comes with blessings, not curses. You will forget your dismay when you see him.

JOEL. But his mother cannot forget. I shall read reproach in her eyes.

DAVID. She has forgotten already; she sees only her babe. Come! (*Turns right, just as door to stable is being opened.*) Look, someone is opening the stable-door! You can look within. (*The space within the stable is lighted with blue floods. A white light shines up from the manger and an amber glow comes from above as though from the star.* MARY, *dressed in blue with a madonna-like head-dress, is seated beside manger, her profile toward audience.* RACHEL *stands back of, but close to* MARY, *her eyes on the manger.* JOSEPH *stands beyond* RACHEL, *opposite* MARY. *The shepherds stand at left of manger, the* MAGI, *right.* JOEL *and* DAVID *remain where they are, watching and listening until close of* MARY'S *song.* MARY *sings, "Sleep, My Little Jesus," which is found in many songbooks, or some other appropriate lullaby.*)

(*At close of lullaby the* FIRST OF THE MAGI *steps forward and kneels before manger.*)

FIRST OF THE MAGI. Gold I offer this child, for he shall be a King.

SECOND OF THE MAGI (*advancing and kneeling beside* FIRST MAGI). Frankincense, the incense of the altar, I bring, for he shall be priest as well as King.

MARY (*smiling at him*). And his name shall be called Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

THIRD OF THE MAGI (*advancing and kneeling*). Myrrh, the gift of the common people, I bring, for he is human as well as divine and will be a man like other men, with joys and sorrows.

MARY. For all your gifts he will have need. (MAGI *rise and resume former positions.*)

ASA (*advances and kneels before* MARY. *Distress and regret are in his voice*). We brought no gifts. So joyful were we at the angel's message that we came in all haste to see the child, forgetting to bring gifts. But now we will go and fetch them. (*Makes motion to rise but* MARY, *with uplifted hand, stops him.*)

MARY. The love and worship that you bring are precious gifts. He would not ask for more.

ASA. We are his subjects and gladly render unto him our love and homage.

OTHER SHEPHERDS. Aye. (*They kneel beside* ASA.)

FIRST OF THE MAGI (*stepping forward*). We, too, give praise and adoration, as well as other gifts. All the world shall be glad and rejoice because of this night.

(MAGI *kneel, right.*)

JOEL. He is indeed the King! I, too, will worship and praise his name.

(*He moves forward and kneels, left, a short distance back of shepherds.* DAVID, *with face uplifted, touches the strings of his lyre, and with group on stage, and choir off stage, sings "Joy to the World, the Lord Has Come." The lights are turned off as singing ends. Appropriate instrumental music, soft and low, continues for a few moments or until audience has left room.*)

The Story of Christmas

By Nathan Pierce, Jr.

Whether we know and celebrate the actual date of Jesus' birth is immaterial, so far as the religious worth of the festival is concerned. December 25 is the day that Christendom has unanimously settled upon as our Saviour's birthday. As a matter of fact, we do not, and probably never shall know the actual time of the Nativity. The year was evidently 748, 749, or 750 of Rome; that is, four or five years before the beginning of our era. The confusion in our manner of reckoning is due to a miscalculation of Dionysius Exiguus, who introduced the Christian calendar, in the sixth century. Thus we are compelled to say, paradoxically, that Christ was born B. C., "Before Christ." As for the month and day, that rests entirely upon tradition. There must have been, however, some good reason for the December 25 tradition. Yet in the early church the sixth of January, the Epiphany festival, was regarded by some as the birthday of Christ. Other biblical chronologists have placed the event in February; or even in the summer season.

In the latter part of the month of December a series of kindred heathen festivals were celebrated at Rome in commemoration of the Golden Age of universal freedom and equality, and also in honor of the Unconquered Sun. The most important of these was the Saturnalia, or feast of Saturn, when labor ceased, prisoners were set free, and all classes gave themselves to mirth and rejoicing. Another was the Sigillaria, or feast of images, when images of the gods, wax tapers, and all sorts of articles of beauty and luxury were distributed to children and kinsfolk. The Brumalia, celebrated on the twenty-first of December, had reference to the winter solstice; it was the festival of the Unconquered Sun. Now because Christianity had its growth especially at Rome and found there the center of its organized life, when the Christmas festival became established as a church day many of the practices of these heathen festivals entered into its celebration. It has even been supposed that the day of Christ's birth was arbitrarily assigned to the end of December that the Christian festival might the more easily supplant the heathen celebrations. At any rate, their occurring at this season helped to substantiate the tradition of the date of December 25 for our Lord's birth.

But now while the holy child was lying in the manger at Bethlehem, and while the Romans were merrymaking in their Saturnalia and Brumalia, our Anglo-Saxon, Germanic, ancestors were wandering in the forests of northern Europe, worshiping Odin and Thor and the other divinities of the Teutonic Olympus. And they, too, had a December festival of the Unconquered Sun at the time of the winter solstice, which their priests celebrated in strange and dark ways—of which we know almost nothing other than that the fir-tree and yule-tree were worshiped; a huge log, the Yule log, was burned; and mistletoe, ever sacred, was largely employed. When, in the later centuries, these heathen forefathers of ours became Christian, they added their contribution of rites and practices to the Romanized, Christian, observance of the birthday of Christianity's Saviour. It will thus be seen that the significance of the day, and its name, are about the only Christian elements that have entered into the making of our modern Christmas.

The merrymaking and giving of gifts, and the burning of candles, are customs of Roman origin; while the Christmas tree, and mistletoe, and Yule log, are Germanic. Yet these practices are none the worse for being of heathen origin. Christianity from the beginning has possessed this power of appropriating unto itself and sanctifying all the good and best in the

on-Christian faiths. Besides, there lurk in these agan festivals, in spite of all their degrading abuses, deep meaning and an adaptation of a real want; ney might be called unconscious prophecies of the hristmas festival. Thus the old church fathers loved point out the symbolic reference of the festival of ne birth of Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the ight of the World, to the birth-festival of the Unonquered Sun, which on the twenty-fifth of Decemer, after the winter solstice, breaks the growing ower of darkness and begins anew his heroic career.

Notwithstanding its secular interest and religious nportance, Christmas is of comparatively late instiution. The early church thought chiefly of the death nd resurrection of Christ, and the completed fact of edemption. So Epiphany, Easter, and Pentecost had ng been established festivals when we first hear of hristmas. The earliest mention of the day is in the ear 360. It began to be observed at Antioch in 380; t at Alexandria not until about 430. Yet it did pidly become an important church day. Chrysostom, delivering a Christmas homily at Antioch Decemer 25, 386, already speaks of it as the fundamental ast, or the root from which all other Christian stivals grew forth; "For," he says, "without the rth of Christ there were no baptism, passion, resurction and ascension, and no outpouring of the Holy pirit."

The day came to be celebrated by three masses, one the night, one at daybreak, and another in the orning (hence the name "Christ-mas"; or the word ay come from the old Saxon term *Moessa,* meaning holy day or fast day). The costliest utensils and ar furniture were used in these masses. During the iddle Ages the celebration assumed, in accordance th the taste of the times, a very theatrical aspect. manger was shown with the Virgin sitting beside it, rrounded by chanting angels. The Wise-men, the epherds, and Joseph, were also represented. Some these customs still survive in certain Roman Cathc churches. Until quite recently, at least, a doll a cradle adorned with lights was rocked on the top the spire of the cathedral of Tübigen in Germany twelve o'clock Christmas night, while a band of nd instruments played the "Hymn of the Nativity" the square below.

The observance of Christmas in England and Gerny has been especially noteworthy. In Old Ennd it was customary on Christmas eve, after the ual devotions, to light large candles, and throw on hearth a large Yule log, or "Christmas log." At urt and in the houses of the wealthy an officer, the Lord of Misrule," was appointed to superintend the ristmas revelries; and in Scotland a similar funcnary was chosen under the title, "The Abbot of reason." On Christmas eve and evening in Old England mummers, or masked buffoons went from house to house, acting short stage plays. These mummers wore the most fantastic costumes imaginable, and made a great deal of sport. It was usual to deck the houses and churches with evergreens, and especially with mistletoe. A century ago, on Christmas eve, mistletoe was carried to the high altar of English cathedrals; and a public and universal liberty, pardon, and freedom to all sorts of inferior and wicked people was proclaimed. This custom had its origin, of course, in the fact that the day has ever been associated with good-will and good fellowship—a time, therefore, for forgiveness of those who have injured us and forgetfulness of the injury done.

In the north of Europe Christmas has always been celebrated as a children's festival, and there originated the world-famous myth of St. Nicholas, or Santa Claus, or Kris Kringle; the friend and patron saint of good children. The original Nicholas was Bishop of Myra, in Lydia, Asia Minor. We know almost nothing about him, except that he was present at the Council of Nicaea, in 325. Tradition tells us, however, that he was very fond of children, and they of him. This fact has canonized him in the world's heart. When Christmas came to be the great children's day of the year, his name was thus gradually associated with it. The French Noel is derived from the Latin *natalis,* "birthday." The Spanish name is, similarly, Navidad.

It was formerly the custom in some of the small villages in northern Germany to commission a personage known as Knecht Rupert to distribute to the children gifts from their parents and friends. Disguised by a mask, wearing an enormous flaxen beard, clad in a long white robe, Knecht Rupert went from house to house; was received by the parents with great ceremony; called for the children, and after a strict investigation into their conduct, dispensed the gifts accordingly.

The Protestant reformation brought a kind of refinement to the celebration of Christmas by emphasizing its Christian elements and excluding many things which did not have, or could not be given, a religious significance. Under the influence of evangelical Christianity, Christmas has become a children's festival rather than a church day. The dissenters of the Church of England, or Puritans, taking offense at the coarse and irreligious character which the festival had acquired in the Middle Ages, abolished it altogether. The Puritans of New England would not recognize the day in any manner; they regarded its celebration as savoring of popery. This view has passed almost entirely away, and of late years the celebration of Christmas in some form or other has become well-nigh universal among the evangelical Christians of England and America.

CHURCH, HOME, PARENTS

Conducted by Mary M. Chalmers

A Study of Home Influence

This influence is demonstrated in a series of tests made by a Kansas Sunday school. A survey was made of members coming *alone,* so far as other members of the family are concerned. In one department twenty-eight per cent. came alone and created eighty per cent. of that department's losses (withdrawals for other than a good reason). In other departments thirty-three per cent. created ninety-six per cent. of the losses, thirty-six per cent. alone and eighty-five per cent. of the losses, thirty-eight per cent. alone, and created seventy-two per cent. of the losses. In one department—made up of members really old enough to understand—seventeen per cent. said they "did not know whether father and mother were church-members anywhere." These seventeen per cent. created sixty per cent. of that department's losses. Two hundred and seventy-eight withdrawals were analyzed for causes. There were just four for other than good reason—where father or mother were enrolled in the school. In another study, ninety per cent. of the parents who were not members of this church, whose children came a Sunday or two and desired to join the school, refused them permission to do so.

This indicates very clearly that the home has a tremendous influence, even when parents strive to be neutral in religion. Only by keeping the family together in the church can we expect to influence the child in Christian ideals. Where the child comes from a home unsympathetic or indifferent to the church and the Sunday school the child soon drops out.

The positive influence of the home, however, is as encouraging as is its negative influence. Where children have the heritage of a home, where religion has a natural and normal place, they are powerfully influenced in favor of the church and Christianity. These parents cooperate intelligently with the program of the church and with the church school teacher, and are properly instructed as to the privileges and obligations of church-membership before the moment of decision comes in the child's life.

(Below is a letter prepared by Howard Rounds, director of Christian education in the First Church:)

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH,

Ottawa, Kans.,

Sends Greeting to the Home!

You have honored this church by entrusting to its school _____, who has enrolled in the _____ department, whose teacher is _____ _____.

Thanks for your confidence and this opportunity given us. The church, the school, department, and teacher will all strive to serve that growth of Christian character may be the result. But to impart the Christian education desired the school must be supplemented and supported by the parents and the home. *You* hold it in your power to help create values which, alone and unaided by you, we cannot anticipate. We bring to your attention, therefore, some of the ways in which *parents can help.*

Cooperate in Regularity and "On-Timeness." You want for your children all the educational advantages the school has to offer; our time with them is limited. Our program is planned to use every minute. The lessons are related, consecutive, cumulative. Each absence means a break; tardiness involves both personal loss and interruption of class interest. Help us help them by arranging home schedules for this nine-forty-five-every-Sunday-morning hour, even though it means the changing of accustomed family routine.

Use the "Family Entrance." Everybody is welcome, alone or otherwise. *But* you should know that the boy or girl whose mother and dad come also has several hundred times the chance of remaining in the school long enough to reap its full benefits. Your example is a powerful influence. What is not good enough for dad—or mother, is usually not good enough for sonny. Besides, this is not merely a place for children. We have more adults than little children enjoying our school. Character-development is a life-time matter. Parents find delightfully interesting and helpful classes. The investment of this time and example pays big dividends. Bring, instead of send.

Get Acquainted with the Teacher and the Lessons. Teachers are of course as busy as all capable folks are and they give freely of time and talent in this volunteer service to your home and to many others. But the teacher would be glad to know you and to know your interests and insight in your child. In case of necessary absence, or of sickness, call the teacher and explain—and a word of appreciation and commendation would be an encouragement. Find out about the lessons and think with your boy or girl on the problems they present—it will be stimulating for both of you.

Make Home Influences Helpful. Such influences as magazines, books, radio programs, movies, activities and friends selected—all play their part, either for or against the training given by the church school. Make your child's way of living a joyous one, crowded so full of the best that the second-best can find no room. Give the church and religious interests a fair share in home thinking and in your "table-talk"—which clearly reveals family interest. Give your children the priceless memory of a home where religion had a natural and normal place. If you want irreverent children, why

will grow up to avoid the church, just criticize the pastor, the church, and the Bible. It never fails to produce these results.

Advise with us—when you have a helpful suggestion, we want to know it; if you have problems, come to us and we'll talk things over. We are deeply in earnest in our belief that sincere, intelligent, persistent, hearty *parental cooperation* is the golden key that opens for childhood and youth the royal treasure house of *Christian character* through *religious education.*

Cordially,

_____,
Pastor,

_____,
Superintendent.

(*Accompanying the letter is a chart entitled:*)

UP THE SUNDAY SCHOOL STEPS TO CHRISTIAN LIVING

Every Step Is Important! Help the Child!
Come to the First Baptist Church!"

Under this caption is portrayed in graphic form the lesson theme of each course offered by the school, from the nursery years to seventeen and the classes provided for young people and adults. If such a letter were mailed to every parent, and the letter followed by a call from the teacher, who took with her the leaflet "The Family and the Sunday School" (50 cents per hundred) and "The Letter to Parents" (2 cents per copy), describing the particular course the children of that home were studying, there would certainly be a marked increase in attendance.

The Ottawa Church also provides the proper adult class with a record of calls made, which the class is expected to follow up. This card reads:

RECORD FOR AN ADULT CLASS

Name _____ Age _____
Address _____ Phone _____
Has enrolled in the _____ Department
on _____ (Date).

Remarks:

_____

_____

(*A "door ajar" to this home; enlist the parents!*)

WHEN Jesus was born the world became a new world. Jesus changed everything. A significant and hopeful restlessness stirred to its depths the whole ocean of human society with all its urgent but aimless interests. Drawn by the magnet of a star, Wise-men came from eastern lands to see him who had drawn them, and men nearer the center dreamed broader and brighter dreams as if their minds had been touched by light which suffused the startled sky. —*Joseph Parker.*

RECENT BOOKS

AMERICAN PREACHERS OF TODAY. By Edgar De Witt Jones. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 317 pages. Price, $2.00.

Doctor Jones is himself one of our great pulpiteers, therefore his selection of names for this book is interesting. It is certainly catholic enough, eminently representative, since it goes all the way from Clarence Edward Macartney to Reinhold Niebuhr, and from Rabbi Wise and Father Coughlin to Campbell Morgan. The men are described rather intimately, their methods of sermon preparation, and their conception of the ministerial office. Short quotations and selections from their sermons and writings are here and there introduced. The three Baptists included are Harry Emerson Fosdick, Bernard C. Clausen, and George W. Truett. Fosdick comes first. His pulpit is characterized as "the most preeminent of the Christian faith in America, if not in the world," and his as "the most extraordinary preaching opportunity of modern times." In view of the renewed interest that is being taken today in sermons—at least the preaching of the outstanding pulpit orators—this well-prepared volume meets a real demand and should have a large sale.

THE BETTER PART: A PLEA FOR PERSONAL RELIGION. By Lyman P. Powell. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. 212 pages. Price, $1.50.

Doctor Powell gained no little notoriety a couple of years ago from his book on Mary Baker Eddy. It was then supposed that he had gone over bag and baggage to Christian Science. He is still in the Episcopal Church, rector of a Bronx borough parish. The present volume is likewise full of enconiums of Christian Science and its prophetess, but it also discusses many subjects of present-day religious concern, including "Rethinking Missions" and Buchmanism. Some of his readers will regard Doctor Powell as too catholic in his views, but he does strike many nails on the head, and he is a facile writer. "The world is in a hole . . . the only permanent remedy for us in our sorry plight is a change of heart; but a mass change of heart is no more permanent than a mass change of mind. We must as individuals become *somewhat* before we can try to make the world a safe place to live in."

DARK CIRCLE OF BRANCHES. By Laura Adams Armer. Longmans, Green & Co. 212 pages. Price, $2.50.

A book for readers of any age who are interested in the American Indian. It centers around "The Mountain Chant of the Navahoes" and the boy, Na Nai, and is full of the myths and legends of the Navahoes. It is interesting, even fascinating, and finely illustrated. We imagine that almost any boy, seven to seventeen, would

regard it as a very acceptable Christmas present. The author, with a former book, *Waterless Mountain,* won the Newbury Medal, 1931, for the most distinguished contribution to American literature for children.

EDUCATION FOR A NEW ERA: A CALL TO LEADERSHIP. By A. Gordon Melvin. The John Day Company. 30 pages. Price, 25 cents.

Four alternative paths lie before society, the author believes. He discusses three of these and dismisses them. A "New Plan" of social control is necessary. In analyzing the situation he raises the question, "Has democracy ever been tried?" He declares: "Too often American democracy has meant, 'I'm as good as you are.' We need a democracy which says, 'You're as good as I am.'" In the schools we have a fine opportunity to release "the developing forces of a new society" and "the leadership of the school in a changing society issues a vital challenge to teachers. . . There is one work which no machine can do, one calling which demands not merely men but the best men, and that calling is teaching." Teachers, however, must be real leaders. While this message was designed for teachers in public schools, Christian leaders will find here inspiration for their work of helping girls and boys build their lives around the teachings of Jesus.

THE PLAYTIME PRIMER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. (Life Enrichment Series.) The A B C's of Play in the Church. By Mabel B. Martin for the B. Y. P. U. A. Judson Press. 110 pages. Paper, 40 cents.

This manual is designed to outline a year's program of social-recreation events in the church. There is a chapter devoted to the type of social-recreation leader needed to bring such events to a successful issue. One chapter tells about the equipment, and how to finance the events. There are sample party programs, and suggestions for special occasions. There is also included a list of source-material, which will be found helpful.

HUMOR, OLD AND NEW

SHE. "Father objects to your suit, dear."

HE. "Why, that's strange. His is almost as bad as mine."

"BILL'S going to sue the company for damages."

"Why? Wot did they do to 'im?"

"They blew the quittin'-whistle when 'e was carryin' a 'eavy piece of iron, and 'e dropped it on 'is foot."

PROFESSOR. "You say you are engaged in some original research. Upon what subject?"

SOPHOMORE. "I'm trying to discover why the ink won't flow from my fountain pen unless I place it in an upright position in the pocket of a light fancy vest."

A TRAMP was given a piece of pie on condition that he saw some wood. He took a bite of the pie and said to the lady of the house: "Madam, if it's all the same to you I'll eat the wood and saw the pie."

MR. POWYS was talking to an old country woman on the occasion of the queen's jubilee in 1897. "What do you understand by the word 'jubilee'?" he asked her.

"Well," answered the old dame, "if you've been married fifty years and the man's alive it's a golden wedding. If he's dead it's a jubilee."

"THEN you don't think I practise what I preach, eh?" queried the minister in talking with one of the deacons at a meeting.

"No, sir, I don't," replied the deacon. "You've been preachin' on the subject of resignation for two years, an' ye haven't resigned yet."

"WHAT sort o' meenister hae ye gotten, Geordie?" asked a Scotchman of his friend.

"Weel," said the friend, "we seldom git a glint o' him; six days o' th' week he's inveesible, and on the seventh he's incomprehensible."

MARK TWAIN, in an after-dinner speech at the Wagner Society, once said: "Gentlemen, I have been taking great interest in Wagner. I've been to orchestral concerts to hear his works played. I've stayed at home to study his compositions in full score. The conclusion I've arrived at, gentlemen, is that Wagner's music is not half as bad as it sounds."

HISTORY was the subject which the class was studying, and presently the teacher asked: "Now, can any of you tell me who Joan of Arc was?"

Profound silence. Then a hand went up, and a small boy shouted gleefully: "Please, teacher, Noah's wife."

BOB INGERSOLL was talking with an old colored woman in Washington upon religious matters. "Do you really believe, aunty," said he, "that people are made out of dust?"

"Yes, sah! The Bible say dey is, an' I believes it."

"But what is done in wet weather, when there's nothing but mud?"

"Den I s'pects dey make infidels an' such truck."

Lesson Topics for January, 1934

January 7. THE INCARNATION. Matt. 1:1 to 2:23.
January 14. GOD'S VICTORIOUS SON. Matt. 3:1 to 4:11.
January 21. THE THREEFOLD MINISTRY OF JESUS. Matt. 4:12-25.
January 28. A CHRISTIAN ACCORDING TO CHRIST. Matt. 5:1-48.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS
IMPROVED UNIFORM SERIES
FOURTH QUARTER, 1933: THE LIFE OF PAUL

AIM. By a study of the life of Paul to discover how Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, to learn of the spread of the gospel by missionary work in the first century, and to gain a world view of the task of the Christian Church in the twentieth century.

LESSON X. DECEMBER 3. FACING CONFLICT FOR CHRIST

Acts 18: 18 to 20: 38. (Verses printed, 19: 8-20)

GENERAL THEME: PAUL IN EPHESUS

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Isaiah 40: 18-23

KEY VERSE: Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake.—Matt. 5: 10

8 And he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God.

9 But when divers were hardened, and believed not, but spake evil of that way before the multitude, he departed from them, and separated the disciples, disputing daily in the school of one Tyrannus.

10 And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.

11 And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul:

12 So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them.

13 Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth.

14 And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so.

15 And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye?

16 And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded.

17 And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.

18 And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds.

19 Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver.

20 So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Paul in Ephesus. Acts 19: 8-20. "Reasoning and persuading" (ver. 8) are both important in soul-winning, but the first should always have the second as its objective.

Tuesday. The Riot at Ephesus. Acts 19: 23-29. Mobs are vain things, and noise never brings a cause anywhere. Men like this town clerk reach their ends twice as quick as mob-leaders.

Wednesday. The Message to the Ephesians. Eph. 1: 1-14. A great end is here thought of: the outcome of God's eternal purpose and planning, making for "the praise of his glory" (ver. 14), and it is —our redemption.

Thursday. Spiritual Conflict. Eph. 6: 10-20. A spiritual conflict demands spiritual weapons. Some of them are enumerated below. Is the Christian church forgetting that it has a fight—or else using the wrong kind of weapons?

Friday. Jehovah Our Strength. Ps. 27: 1-6. This caption is finely expressive of God's help. Instead of snatching us out of danger—trouble—he gives us his strength to face it.

Saturday. An Affectionate Parting. Acts 20: 28-38. It should spur the Christian worker to energetic, faithful service: to be able like Paul to make a good final report. Notice how beautiful are all Paul's farewells: those at the close of his epistles, for example.

Sunday. Jehovah's Greatness. Isa. 40: 18-23. God's people of old had their spiritual vision enlarged by seeing him—as they so clearly did—in nature. Shall we moderns not let other wonders, of today, make God, for us, both great and "greatly to be praised"?

At the Threshold

"At Ephesus Paul faced two of the most impregnable evils: religious prejudice and an evil economic order. Diana and her worship had been intrenched for centuries. Demetrius and his 'gods' dictated the policies of the community."

"Religion has to steer between a superstitiousness that sees the magically supernatural everywhere and a materialistic realism that sees God nowhere." —*Henry Churchill King.*

"The conflict with magic was more easily decided than was the conflict of *the Way* with the commercial aspects of Diana worship at Ephesus. In his Gospel, Luke shows a deep interest in the teaching of Jesus that touches upon the lure of material profit, and in Acts he includes available narratives that illustrate the antagonism of materialism to the spiritual aspects of the gospel."—*The Abingdon Commentary.*

In 2 Corinthians 1: 8 the apostle is supposedly referring to experiences of this sojourn at Ephesus—"our affliction which befell us in Asia."

The Lesson Before Us

I. EVANGELISM AT EPHESUS
Acts 19: 8-10

Paul returns to Antioch; his "home base." This brings to a close his second missionary journey. The period of his career that is spoken of as the third missionary journey begins in Acts 18, with verse 23. The church at Antioch had become large and strong enough so that it could get along without him. The call of the world sounded loudly in Paul's ears; so, after a few months of rest—if he ever rested!—he is off again on another missionary campaign. He passes through Galatia and Phrygia, visiting and strengthening the churches in those regions, to

Ephesus, known as "the Eye of Asia." This was another strategic point in the gospel's advance—like Antioch, Corinth, and Rome. It was the capital of the province of Asia and was the metropolis of Asia Minor. Many important highways brought thither inland trade, and by sea it was in close touch with all the Mediterranean ports, Corinth in especial. Paul reached Ephesus, according to Robertson, in the early summer of 54 (53), and remained there upward of three years.

From Acts we gain only an imperfect idea of the large results of this Ephesus mission. Demetrius confesses (19: 26)

that not alone in the city, "but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people." Remember that the seven churches addressed in Revelation — representative churches—were all in the Ephesus district.

The Jews of Ephesus seem to have been friendlier to Paul's message than other Jewish communities. For three months he had the freedom of the synagogue. When there was a change of sentiment he transferred his work to the lecture-hall, or schoolroom, of Tyrannus, who was evidently a convert. In the morning, when the school was in session, Paul would be working at his trade (20:34, 35); from eleven to four he preached and taught. He made long evangelistic tours out into the province (ver. 10). He also did lots of pastoral work (20:31). The large accomplishments of these years are significantly summed up in verse 20. The Roman author Pliny, writing a generation later, tells that all that part of the world had become a hotbed of Christianity.

Notice the expression, "the Way" (ver. 9)—the R. V. properly capitalizes the word—as a designation of the Christian discipleship (cp. 9:2; 22:4; 24:22). So were the Christians called, "those of this Way," in the earliest days of the church. It is meaningful: in, on, the way; the way of, with, Christ; not arrived, but on the way; not standing still, but on the way! We think, of course, of Jesus' declaration in John 14:6.

II. From Sorcery to Christ. Ver. 18-20

"The strolling Jews, exorcists," of verse 13, among whom were the seven sons of Sceva, were itinerant healers, professing to cure by charms, spells, and other suchlike magic.—Plenty of those people are to be found even in our enlightened age!—Observing the power of the name of Jesus, as Paul pronounced it, they impiously tried to appropriate it to their own jugglery.

The "many also," of verse 18, would refer to converts who had been similarly engaged, in witchcraft, exorcism, "black art." Their knowledge of Jesus and the gospel would thus far be slight, but sufficient to make them realize that their practises—"deeds"—had been demoniac, rather than godly; or conscious humbug. When a man truly comes into contact with Christ he is compelled to throw off not only his baggage of positive sin, but also that of falsity and pretense.

These same people are indicated in "not a few of them" (ver. 19). The "books" containing the written magic incantations and formulas were, it should be remembered, rolls, or sheets, of papyrus, or bits of parchment. Ephesus was notorious for the use of such charms.

The sincerity of these converted magicians and the extent of their sacrifice are made more evident by the reminder that the loss of these "books" that they cast on the bonfire would deprive them of their accustomed means of livelihood. Converts who go that far are getting pretty near to Christ. "In the sight of all": professions and confessions made in public strengthen faith and conviction and preclude backing out. The money value (ver. 20) would be represented by, say, $10,000 in our currency.

We are reminded of a similar scene at Florence, in 1497. Stirred by the powerful preaching of Savonarola the people made a "bonfire of vanities"; set fire to a great heap of frivolous books, pictures and wearing apparel. A merchant of Venice had offered 22,000 gold florins for the lot.

Verse 20: "A great battle had been fought between the power of truth and the power of error, and the saying had been verified once again, 'Great is truth and shall prevail'" (Dean Vaughan).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

Suggest a number of respects in which the Christian life may be designated "the Way" (ver. 9).

The hands play an important part in the ministry of Jesus and the apostles (ver. 10). What may this mean to us, figuratively?

The attempt to traffic with the name of Jesus never succeeds. Nor will you have any power by the Jesus of someone else; he must be yours (ver. 13).

The statement is often made that the gospel of Christ thrives best when opposed. What do you think? And does this hold true in foreign missions?

Would you see any connection between Paul's work and experiences described here and the fact that the church at Ephesus later became one of the most important of the early Christian centuries?

Can you recall anything that you consigned to the bonfire, figuratively speaking, when you became a Christian? Is there anything in your life now that should be so treated?

We have various antivice agencies that prevent the sale of and destroy obscene books and papers. How effective is this? Is it getting at the root of the matter, and what would that be?

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Edward Bleakney, Pittsburgh, Pa.

After reading the story of Paul at Ephesus, the suggested passages of Scripture for the week and the Key Verse, I discovered that it was the Key Verse that impressed me.

It is a good text for any study of Paul because he surely suffered persecution, "Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one," he said (2 Cor. 11:24). And he declares in the Second Epistle of Timothy that those "that would live godly in Christ shall suffer persecution."

Christians of all ages have been persecuted, beaten, tortured, imprisoned, and burned at the stake; have "climbed the steep ascent of heaven through peril, toil, and pain."

Those who would follow Jesus were told by him that it would cost. He teaches that being a Christian may mean loss, misunderstanding, false accusation, and persecution.

Are Christians persecuted today? Even if one lives a passive Christian life, he stirs up opposition. But if his Christianity is active and aggressive, he is more strongly opposed, while if he conducts an aggressive campaign for righteousness, he suffers still more.

If Christians are not persecuted, what are we to conclude? That there is something wrong with their type of religion? Many Christians are not persecuted because their religion is not aggressive. The ministry of Christ was a ministry of aggressiveness. Jesus was an aggressive individual. Christianity is an aggressive religion.

Real Christianity is always at odds with the ways of the world. The church is never satisfied with the world. Even in the Dark Ages it was not. Civilization has improved, but the Christian conscience has grown sensitive more rapidly than the world has grown virtuous, so the church is less satisfied than ever. There is a great gulf fixed between the principles of Jesus and those of twentieth-century civilization. Thoroughgoing Christians are really a small group in an alien world.

Twentieth-century Christianity is challenging the world to quite an extent in these days. It is going into all the world with its message. It is knocking harder than ever at the door of politics, industry, and society.

J. Folkes Jackson says, in *Primitive Religion,* that "the secret of the growth of the early church was that it cost to belong to it." Life was safe outside the church and unsafe inside. If one were in the church, he might be thrown to the lions or burned at the stake. The only way for modern Christianity to capture the world is to regain some of that spirit.

At the Atlanta Quadrennial Meeting of the Federal Council of Churches, Bishop McConnell declared that "the church must constantly criticize and recriticize modern civilization wherever it is out of harmony with the principles of Christ."

The Christianity of the individual must be more aggressive, militant, and courageous. This is the spirit for the individual in Christianity.

Let us remember that when our religion is aggressive and courageous and

when we are persecuted for it, we are in line with the prophets of all ages:

"They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane,
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train."

Before My Class of Women

Mabel Stevens Burton, McMinnville, Ore.

Paul in Ephesus should be of unusual interest to women. This city of beauty and wealth; this very religious city, the center of Greek worship with a temple dedicated to a woman, which was one of the seven wonders of the world.

In this matchless temple of Diana there was a marvelous image of the goddess which had fallen from heaven. Thousands yearly helped the business of the city by taking home copies of the sacred statue, in silver, marble or terra cotta. There are stories of mighty Amazons who were priestesses in this temple.

Here in the midst of pagan mysticism, Paul came, reluctantly, seemingly by God's purpose to be directed and detained for about three years. His experiences here were the climax of his missionary career. When he came he found twelve "Baptists," that is, Jews following John the Baptist, and when he departed, a strong *Christian* church begged him not to leave them. When he came he found these few with a sort of "kill-joy" religion; but he soon gave them a key to the new faith—"Rejoice." He established himself with the family of Aquila and Priscilla, fellow tent-makers. Paul always was ready to give honor to his women friends as well as to the men who labored with him in the gospel. He soon became friend and comforter to many by his "house-to-house" preaching; even miracles are recorded as the outcome of his loving sympathy. When he left, the city was outwardly the same, but there remained a group of Christlike folks of whom the angel of John's Vision solemnly testified, "I know thy works and thy labour and thy patience and how thou cans't not bear them which are evil; . . and for my name's sake hast laboured and hast not fainted."

Paul, like his Master, left no organization; just made disciples; and they must carry on, no matter how long it takes them to learn to live by the Spirit. He felt no need of a Pauline church, only a great need of Christlike lives. He trained his successor, Timothy, and when he felt it was time to leave these friends of his and Christ, he left. He practised what he preached—if there were persecutions to be endured, he was able to endure . . . if words of condemnation or sympathy should be said, he said them . . . if suffering with Christ for the sake of others, Paul suffered, and when his work was finished in Ephesus, he must part with his friends no matter how sad the parting, for he could say from the depths of his heart, "The will of the Lord be done." His farewell and prayer were most tender because he knew they would see his face no more, but the remembrance of his Master's words, "it is more blessed to give than to receive," sustained them all, and the word of God grew mightily and prevailed.

Lessons for women to learn from Paul's experience in Ephesus are:

1. Live on such intimate terms with Jesus Christ that his Spirit can always lead. In small affairs or large, at home or abroad, we need guidance from One who knows the way we should go. May we hear his voice say, "This is the way, walk ye in it." There will be no haunting regrets thereby.

2. Choose strong Christian friends of like habits and tastes. We know not what we owe in the life of Paul to Aquila and Priscilla. Life is made or marred by the friends we choose. Homes are strengthened or broken by friends of the members. Young folks have been successes or failures because of friends.

3. The most productive kingdom work is personal. That was Christ's method. It was Paul's way in this outstanding field of service. This kind of service makes for permanence of the church.

4. Those won as citizens to the kingdom need training in inner control. Paul had learned that the religion of Jesus is a religion of the spirit; not organization, not definite rules, but righteousness in action. A few lives that are different in a great city seem of no influence, but if those lives show forth the fruits of the Spirit they count largely for Christianity against paganism.

5. A leader needs always to have in mind a successor. Paul trained his spiritual son, Timothy, to take his place. Mothers need to train daughters; teachers to train pupils; church workers to train others; then they need to let these successors do the work in their own way. How often we see the mistake of elders still insisting on their ideas and methods being used by successors, when what they need to do is follow Paul's example and move out and away. Let the young folks try their wings unhampered by the fears and fuss of the elders.

6. We can learn the value of opposition, and not be afraid of the individual or the mob who try to put us to rout. Be sure you are right and then go ahead. Be glad of the strength which will be given you to stand, and having done all to stand. Thank God for every testing-time.

7. Let not friends keep you from fulfilling the purpose of your life. If Paul had listened to his friends, Timothy would not have had his chance and there would have been no need for the letter to the Ephesians. Our lives would have been thus poorer. Many a woman has listened to her friends instead of God and so defeated the purpose of her life and the purpose of lives entrusted to her care. Let us say with Paul, "none of these things move me"—for he, like the Christ he so loved had stedfastly set his face toward Jerusalem, a hard road, but the road of the loving heart which leads to God. "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might."

Crannellograms

Philip W. Crannell, D. D.

1. Persecution is a blessing we understand better when it is over. 2. A *returned* missionary is a *missionary* returned. 3. Evil rarely persecutes unless first assailed; our lesson gives the causes and first rumblings. 4. Paul had abundant courage; he needed it for synagogue preaching. 5. If the synagogue gets too hot, "hire a hall." 6. Painful to separate the disciples; but the Jews really did the separating. 7. A typical Pauline campaign: spake boldly, reasoning, persuaded; departed, separated; continued two years. 8. Paul, apostle to Gentiles, never ceased to speak to Jews—if they would listen! 9. God's power did in truth in Ephesus what magic only pretended to do. 10. Graft and greed are always exploiting or counterfeiting gospel power or scientific truth. 11. The demoniac asks the counterfeit who he is; he knew very well who he was not: Jesus, or a genuine disciple. 12. The defeat of the counterfeit is the triumph of the true. 13. Christ's deeds of power magnify his name, even with those who would prefer to blame. 14. We need several Ephesian book-bonfires today. What? 15. Eloquent silver: "Money talks!" Fifty thousand pieces. 16. A movement which rouses Jews to opposition, drives out devils and diseases, shames exorcists, undermines idolatry, is steering straight for strife.

The Lesson Lived

Susanna G. Fisher

A Clog or a Spring-Board

Not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account (Acts 19:27).

How it (money) enriches life if its possessor sees clearly that this is what it was made for, and if he stedfastly devotes it to all those higher interests that give strength and fineness to human life! But so soon as it is sought for its own sake, it not only loses its luster and ceases to minister to our moral progress, but begins at once to undermine the very life which it was intended to bless. Wealth may be a clog about our feet, or a spring-board upon which we rise, according as we hoard or use it. A great soul rises upon his wealth to wider vision and larger service. To sum up the whole matter, it is not only possible for one "to be happy though rich"—that is, in spite of wealth—but we may be happy *through riches,* if we but have the moral greatness to seek and to use material means for the highest welfare of mankind.—*R. E. Gains, in "Men and Missions."*

Lesson XI. December 10. CHRIST'S WAY OF LIFE

Acts, chapters 21-26. (Verses printed, 24: 10-23)

General Theme: PAUL IN CÆSAREA

Prepared by Mitchell Bronk, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 2: 1-8

KEY VERSE: Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.—Acts 24: 16

10 Then Paul, after that the governor had beckoned unto him to speak, answered, Forasmuch as I know that thou hast been of many years a judge unto this nation, I do the more cheerfully answer for myself:

11 Because that thou mayest understand, that there are yet but twelve days since I went up to Jerusalem for to worship.

12 And they neither found me in the temple disputing with any man, neither raising up the people, neither in the synagogues, nor in the city:

13 Neither can they prove the things whereof they now accuse me.

14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

15 And have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.

16 And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and toward men.

17 Now after many years I came to bring alms to my nation, and offerings.

18 Whereupon certain Jews from Asia found me purified in the temple, neither with multitude, nor with tumult.

19 Who ought to have been here before thee, and object, if they had ought against me.

20 Or else let these same here say, if they have found any evil doing in me, while I stood before the council,

21 Except it be for this one voice, that I cried standing among them, Touching the resurrection of the dead I am called in question by you this day.

22 And when Felix heard these things, having more perfect knowledge of that way, he deferred them, and said, When Lysias the chief captain shall come down, I will know the uttermost of your matter.

23 And he commanded a centurion to keep Paul, and to let him have liberty, and that he should forbid none of his acquaintance to minister or come unto him.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Paul Accused. Acts 24: 1-9. Not in the sense in which they meant it, perhaps, but Paul was indeed moving "insurrections" (ver. 5, R. V.) in the world. The world is usually in need of such upsets.

Tuesday. Paul's Defense. Acts 24: 10-23. "The Way" (ver. 14, 22) vividly suggests many things about the Christian life. It is the Way of Christ Jesus, notice, and not of Paul, or any other Christian.

Wednesday. Faith and Prayer in Trouble. Ps. 86: 11-17. Prayer in the name and spirit of Christ always brings us closer to him; and in the time of trouble his intimacy is precious.

Thursday. Divine Help Assured. Mark 13: 9-13. Carrying out the idea of the Way—the true Christian will be likely to find trial and tribulation along it, but the Divine Helper likewise.

Friday. A Good Conscience. 1 Peter 3: 8-17. The outward peace and confidence that it gives produce an exemplary life that nonplusses one's detractors (ver. 16).

Saturday. The Approval of Conscience. 1 John 3: 13-24. Here are enumerated some ways in which we can "check-up" on conscience; e. g., love, "in deed and truth." Notice that one's own heart condemns when the conscience is "troubled."

Sunday. The Reign of Christ. It is true to prophecy that the devil and demons should have tried to interfere with Jesus' work. They are still at it. It certainly grieves God—but at the same time amuses him (ver. 4). Yet for him and us it is a terribly serious matter.

At the Threshold

"Open the Book of Acts at any place and you meet the apostle Paul either headed toward, in the midst of, or coming from some unusual experience or thrilling adventure."—*Frank L. Wood.*

"Felix stands before us a warning that a man may be convinced of his sin, and yet not converted to God."—*Trench.*

"Our lesson is really a study in the eloquence which character gives. It is a study in the oratory which can come only from personal experience. What Paul had experienced turned his words into weapons. The life God had given him made his words living."—*Lynn H. Hough.*

Paul's defense is really a plea, addressed to Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice, to repent and accept the salvation of Jesus. This plea is made with wonderful skill. He seeks to touch them indirectly through his own experience. I am decidedly of the opinion that the apostle was thinking far more of the salvation of the procurator, the king and his consort, than of his own freedom.

The Lesson Before Us

I. Brought Down to Cæsarea

Claudius Lysias, commandant of the Roman military forces at Jerusalem, impressed by Paul's claim of Roman citizenship, had rescued him from the Jewish mob and forestalled the conspiracy to assassinate him by sending him down to the governor, Antonius Felix, whose official residence was at Cæsarea.

Of this Felix the Roman historian Tacitus says: "He exercised the prerogative of a king, with all cruelty and lust, in the spirit of a slave."—He had been born a slave.—His wife Drusilla was a daughter of Herod Agrippa I. He had been married before to a granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra.

Five days after his arrival in Cæsarea Paul was brought before the governor, to answer the double charge of sedition and temple desecration, presented by the high priest Ananias, through a Roman lawyer, Tertullus (24: 5, 6). Campbell Morgan says of the accusation that it "consisted of a truth objectionably stated."

The only charge that could reasonably and honestly be brought against Paul was, of course, heresy—from the point of view of the Jewish religious leaders.

II. Defends Himself to Felix. Acts 24

Paul's defense is marked by courtesy without flattery. He declared himself fortunate in being brought before a judge who was familiar with Jewish affairs.—Felix had been governor for five or six years.—He flatly denied the charges. The "Way" that he was teaching is the true way of God, the God of the fathers. In that God he still believed. He was preaching the resurrection of the dead, indeed; but that was a doctrine to which a whole party of the Jews themselves subscribed. He refers to the fact that this visit of his to Jerusalem had been occasioned by his bringing relief to the poor of Judea.

From mixed motives Felix defers the case; ordering that the prisoner, meanwhile, should be well treated (ver. 22, 23). This Roman procurator has been called one of the "regrettable characters" of history. Here was a damaged soul that might have been restored. And he was seemingly inclined that way. But the bad in him smothered his stirrings toward the good. He appears to have been fairly well acquainted with the career and message of the Nazarene; but he and his wife Drusilla were desirous of hearing Paul's interpretation of it. Accordingly, we have that memorable interview (ver. 24-26).

If Felix had been a thorough man, if he had heard Paul to the end of his story, and settled the matter then and there, he would have been won and saved. He is for us a distinguished type of the "putter-off," of the procrastinator. Of bushels of sermons on procrastination he had been made the text.

Paul was as fearless in his preaching to the governor and his wife as Savonarola before Lorenzo de Medici. Righteousness, self-control and disregard for the judgment of God were three subjects that well might terrify them. Their union was an adulterous one, and he was a bad and dishonest ruler. Yet Felix was interested in Paul's message; wanted to hear it again and again; it strongly appealed to his better nature; at the same time he was looking for graft: If the apostle was able to collect such a big sum for Judean relief, why shouldn't a substantial bribe be at hand for his release? These provincial Roman governors were master-hands at getting themselves bribed! Yet, taken all in all, we must believe that Paul's burning words not only terrified, but almost persuaded Felix. Almost, but not.

III. Paul and Festus. Acts 25, 26

How did Paul pass those two years of detention at Cæsarea? It may be taken for granted that he was constantly preaching the gospel, in one way or another, as later when he was a prisoner at Rome. It is significant that Cæsarea was for five centuries after this a prominent center of Christianity.

Porcius Festus, who succeeded Felix as governor, probably in the year 59, was a better, more honorable man. Paul's case, which had been handed down to him, he found to be a problematical one. He insisted that Paul's accusers should come down from Jerusalem to Cæsarea and again state their charges (25:4, 5).

These charges he found too vague and unsupported to merit the attention of a man accustomed as he was to Roman legal procedure. When he suggests, as a makeshift—he wanted to keep on the good side of the Jews—that the apostle return to Jerusalem, Paul falls back upon the privilege of his Roman citizenship to appeal to the supreme tribunal at Rome. *Ad Cæsarem appello!*

IV. Herod Agrippa II. Acts 25, 26

Herod Agrippa II wanted to stand in well with Rome, so he had come down from his capital, the other Cæsarea, to pay his respects to the new Roman governor. Bernice was his own sister, as well as his mistress. If Paul is to be sent officially to Rome, Festus must dispatch thither some sort of formal accusation—*elogium* was the Latin word. What should it be? He asks Agrippa's advice.

It was no hearing, or trial, this time; but a brilliant court function. The visitors put on much pomp—*phantasia* is the Greek word. And Tertullus' "pestilent fellow" (24:5) is the center of attraction!

He addresses himself to Agrippa, in particular, and is really glad to have him as a hearer. The Herods, for all their badness, were interested in religion. Festus was a Pilate-like man: "What is truth?"—with a sneer; "Thou art mad!" The gospel makes no appeal to such. It has a better chance with people like Agrippa. I think that Paul had hopes of him; that he made one supreme, passionate effort to win him to Jesus. Paul's fervor amazes Festus.

V. "Words of Truth and Soberness." Acts 26

This is the third and last of Paul's "captivity addresses" (22:1-21; 24:10-21). There are, likewise, in Acts, three such addresses of his time of freedom (13:16-41; 17:22-31; 20:17-35). Notice that he liked to tell the story of his conversion. The logic of the address here is irresistible. He was simply driven to Jesus.

The resurrection is the pivotal thing in the gospel. But the Pharisees stand for it. Yet I, a Pharisee, am being hounded to death for preaching it, and the cross, which is also in the writings of these Jews. And because of their bitter race hatred.

This was all "Gentiles' foolishness" (1 Cor. 1:23) *to the sophisticated Festus.* Let us hope, however, that Agrippa could appreciate Paul's reasoning and appeal. His words in verse 28 are, however, for us, cryptic. The original would justify the meaning that Agrippa honestly confesses that it wouldn't take much more such pleading to make him a Christian; or the commonly accepted interpretation that the king is speaking sarcastically; "You'd make me a Christian with talk like that, wouldn't you?"

The point is, and the sad moral, he wasn't persuaded. And "almost persuaded" has passed into religious parlance as one of its saddest phrases.

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

If the Jewish leaders were sincere in their belief that Paul was doing injury to their Jewish faith, in what did their wrong consist?

Why do we have more charity for Claudius Lysias than for Felix in their attitudes toward Paul?

In what respects does Festus resemble Pilate? Which was the fairer, juster?

Was Paul cowardly in avoiding martyrdom? Contrast the situation of Paul with that of Jesus under arrest.

In what particulars would Paul's discourse seem to Festus the ravings of a crazy man?

What do you think Paul would have done if Festus had set him free?

There is a saying, "A good life is the best answer to evil charges." To what extent can we follow out this principle? What is the example of Jesus? Was he always silent before his enemies?

Some think that it is profitless to argue about religion with unbelievers. But notice that Paul did (24:25). May it be suggested that his "reasoning" here was largely a relation of his own experience.

His argument ends with, runs into, pleading (26:29). "Never leave your antagonist in a hostile mood."

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Edward Bleakney, Pittsburgh, Pa.

In view of the fact that the Key Verse expresses Paul's feeling that he has "a conscience void of offense toward God and men," and since the preparatory reading for this lesson includes Peter's statement about a good conscience, and John's reference to the approval of conscience, I would in teaching this lesson go into the whole field of conscience.

What is conscience? Conscience is practically equivalent to "the sense of oughtness"; "the sense of obligation." It is the great distinguisher between right and wrong.

In the opinion of Plato, "reason distinguishes between right and wrong." The early church fathers regarded conscience as "the director of man's spiritual nature." Immanuel Kant called it "the categorical imperative" ("Thou must because thou shouldst"). Samuel Butler, of the famous book *The Analogy,* defines conscience as "the principle in man that approves or disapproves.

Conscience has been regarded by many as an evidence of the divine in man. Just as we come to know the reality of the outward world through the sense of touch, so we come to know the reality of God through conscience. Conscience is then the sense of touch for the reality of God. "Conscience," Dr. George A. Gordon, of Boston, says, "is the hand by which we feel after God and find him."

Conscience, as the sense of obligation, implies that we owe something. We owe something to the Infinite, or to God. Wordsworth was right in saying, "Stern daughter of the voice of God, oh duty!"

Keep your conscience sensitive to the right. Certain radios can be adjusted to pick up the faintest sound. Seek to adjust your conscience so that it can recognize the faintest utterances of the voice of God. The voice of conscience speaks clearly to us to the degree that we listen, recognize, and obey it.

The business of religion is to develop one's conscience so that it is sensitive to the right, both individually and collectively. The conscience of the religious person is much more sensitive to right

and wrong than that of the person who gives little or no thought to religion.

There is such a thing as social conscience. A social conscience is one that is sensitive to social evils. Such a conscience is gradually being developed in modern life. It will grow more and more pronounced in the future. Cultivate and follow such a conscience.

Conscience is to be followed, it matters not where it leads. Never smother your conscience.

One's conscience often leads him to go against the tide, to become a pioneer. When it thus leads, it is not for us to reason why, but to follow. The crusader for conscience' sake will have to drive his ideal against many waves of conventionality and winds of tradition.

But, someone asks, "Am I to follow my conscience even when it tells me to do what other people consider peculiar?" For example, I knew a girl who thought that it was a sin to go for a walk on Sunday. Yes, we are to follow our conscience, even when it tells us such a peculiar thing as not to go walking on Sunday. To us it looks foolish for Daniel to pray with his window open toward Jerusalem. Daniel believed that he should so pray, and it was because he was true to what he considered the leading of the spirit of God that out of this same folk group came Jesus of Nazareth.

We often sing that old familiar hymn, "Where he leads me, I will follow; I'll go with him all the way." Let me change the wording thus: "Where my conscience leads me, I will follow; I'll go with it all the way."

Before My Class of Women

Mabel Stevens Burton, McMinnville, Ore.

The drama of Paul's life began in Jerusalem, city of religion, and ended in Rome, city of force. At every hand it was influenced by women, good and bad. The authority of church, state, and nation were involved in the scenes at Cæsarea; but justice slept. Bad and weak women gave consent to his imprisonment. Because Paul spoke to each group, or to individuals, in a language which they could understand, all listened. Some were stirred by fear because of sin, some were moved by truth and would have set him free but for the crowd, yet all stumbled over the "rock" Christ.

The only crime they could attach to him was the fact that Paul constantly spoke of a Messiah who was a universal Christ, or no Christ at all; and when he mentioned a Christ for the Gentile world the crowd cried, "Away with such a fellow from the earth!" Even women of today need to learn afresh, that Gentiles, outsiders, "natives," are fellow heirs with us of the riches found in Christ Jesus. We need to be friends with those outside our club or clan or church; to realize that "God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth."

We need to pray, and pay, that the story of a Christ who loves all men may be made known to all men. Not a half of the women in our churches are interested in missions. How much better are indifferent Christian women of the twentieth century than an indifferent Drusilla of the first century? The breakdown of our civilization may be pictured in the breakdown of the Jewish civilization of Paul's day because rebellion against order, justice, mercy, in fact rebellion against God and his Son, Jesus Christ, spells doom for any people. Unless we share our Christ with others, he will depart from us. We must make him universal in order that truth and justice, order and mercy may obtain among the peoples of the earth.

A Woman Who Helped and Two Women Who Hindered

It was Paul's own sister, who had trained her boy to be observing, truthful and courageous, who was thus able through the boy's testimony to save the brother's life. A young man who "did his bit" for the sake of fair play. A boy who simply did his duty. Any mother would be proud of such a son. Thus at most unexpected times and in most unusual places one shows the stuff within—and a mother's earnest training is rewarded by a brave deed. How little we know where the path of duty will lead and how far-reaching! For our lives are richer because Paul was not taken at this time.

Another woman took an interest in Paul. The notorious and beautiful Jewess, wife of Felix. She took an interest in Paul's eloquence and made him the fashion. Well her husband knew that only as he received the usual graft could he keep up his lady's social prestige; her jewels and dresses, her slaves and perfume, all dependent on "gifts" from the prisoners. When Paul did not make such gifts the interest in him waned. After two years, Festus took the room occupied by Felix and the crisis was passed. Drusilla had not been unnerved by Paul's message and her Jewish friends had persuaded her to use her influence to have Paul's parole canceled; so he was left bound. The woman had again made gold instead of God her compelling purpose in life. What cared she if a good man was left to years of oblivion as he suffered the abandon of an untried prisoner?

In perhaps the culminating scene of Paul's life another woman appears. King Agrippa, who had been influenced all his life by domineering, degrading women—among whom were the hard-hearted Herodias and sensuous Salome—was a brother of Drusilla and by his side sat another sister, Bernice, who later became the degraded courtesan of two succeeding Roman emperors. Paul would overcome evil with good, so, with a happy manner he tried with all his power to reveal Christ to Agrippa and his unhappy accomplice, Bernice. To that strange company Paul told a tale of glorious adventure into an undiscovered country. He again was "not disobedient to the heavenly vision." The king was almost persuaded that he would be a Christian; but Paul was not persuaded that he would be happier as a king. What a pathetic picture . . . an indifferent, selfish woman by the side of a man almost persuaded, but lost!

Paul's Confidence and Courage

What was Paul's secret? Was it influential friends? Was it his legal learning? His oratory? His rich vein of humor? His cheery sportsmanship? Or was it the calm gained from years of waiting? To use his own words, "I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men." Yes, it was an influential friend, Jesus Christ. It was the learning from Christ that set his speech on fire. Humor and honesty, cheer and calm all came from the same source. These were parts of the "all things" which he could draw from the great bank of God. Again and again he says, "Rejoice in the Lord," . . a real source of joy. He trusted in the high calling of God in Christ Jesus so his confidence was sure.

Every woman is on trial in one way or another, at some time or another, and she needs the confidence and courage of Paul. These things are always available at the same source. The whole armor of God . . . truth and righteousness, peace and faith, salvation and the word of God will constantly give one the ability to meet every situation with assurance of victory.

Remember, "the mind of Christ in Paul and in us."

Crannellograms

Philip W. Crannell, D. D.

1. A conscience void of offense is worth much—and takes much. 2. To get a conscience void of offense, exercise yourself, not others. 3. Sad that so many forget God, remembering man; or, forget their brother while remembering God! 4. Poor the governor of whom Paul cannot say something good: "you have been here for years!" 5. Paul has not been disputing any man, but how vigorously they had disputed him! 6. Lack of proof never troubles prejudice. 7. Fine to be able to confess: "I have sought the way of righteousness." 8. "Heresy" is stressing one phase of truth, one section of God's people; Paul preached the whole gospel and to all people. 9. The sectarian believes that everyone else is a sectarian. 10. The Jews had the same hope as Paul, but he knew more about it. 11. Christianity is a Way: of believing, serving, living, reaching God, because it follows *The Way,* Jesus. 12. Life's way has a glorious climax, the Resurrection — and after. 13. Resurrection—of the just, how glorious, of the unjust, unspeakable!

The Lesson Lived

Susanna G. Fisher

GOD'S OMNIPOTENCE

And they were more than forty that made this conspiracy (Acts 23:13).

Men do not have the last word in this world's affairs. The human hand is not omnipotent. Forty men had bound themselves in a conspiracy to kill Saint Paul, and they were sure their plot could not fail. But a boy heard of the conspiracy, and the apostle was rescued. By nine o'clock that night he was on his way to Cæsarea, under strong military protection. The forty men had everything in their favor, but—they had not thought about God. But for God, their plot would have succeeded.—*Selected.*

GOD OVERRULES

He rehearsed one by one the things which God had wrought (Acts 21:19).

Once when traveling in the Himalayas, I set out for the village of Rampur. I came to a place where two roads branched. I was not sure which was the road to Rampur. I took one of them, and after walking a long distance, I realized that I had chosen the wrong one. If I wanted to return I should have to walk back eleven miles. Distressed at the mistake, I went into the neighboring village of Nalthora. A local shopkeeper beckoned to me. When I went to him he hid the Hindu New Testament he had in his hand, thinking I was a Hindu Sannyasi. After conversing awhile, he said to me, "What do you think of Jesus Christ?" "He is my Saviour," I said. "Do not be troubled," he replied joyfully, "at having lost your way and come here. For some time I have been studying these Gospels. I have many doubts and difficulties. I have been praying that the Lord would send me someone who would clear them up. He has brought you here in answer to my prayer." We continued late into the night talking about Christ, and I spent the next day also with him. His doubts were cleared away and he believed in Christ. Later on he was baptized. In this way God guides us when we entrust ourselves to him. We may think that we have lost our way. But he will take us to places where we are needed and to save souls.—*The Expositor.*

DOERS

What shall I do, Lord? (Acts 22:10.)

When Theodore Roosevelt was asked to inscribe his name in the "Book of Remembrance" for a boys' class in Sunday school, he wrote, "Be ye doers of the word, not hearers only."

"Christianity is the religion that expects you to do something."

"This do and thou shalt live," said Jesus to the lawyer. He changed the order of things forever from "Thou shalt not" to "This do."—*Classmate.*

LESSON XII. DECEMBER 17. FINDING AND FULFILLING GOD'S PURPOSE

Acts, chapters 27 and 28. (Verses printed, 28: 11-22, 30, 31)

GENERAL THEME: PAUL IN ROME

Prepared by MITCHELL BRONK, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 23

KEY VERSE: I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.—Phil. 3:14

11 And after three months we departed in a ship of Alexandria, which had wintered in the isle, whose sign was Castor and Pollux.

12 And landing at Syracuse, we tarried there three days.

13 And from thence we fetched a compass, and came to Rhegium: and after one day the south wind blew, and we came the next day to Puteoli:

14 Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome.

15 And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.

16 And when we came to Rome, the centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard: but Paul was suffered to dwell by himself with a soldier that kept him.

17 And it came to pass, that after three days Paul called the chief of the Jews together: and when they were come together, he said unto them, Men and brethren, though I have committed nothing against the people, or customs of our fathers, yet was I delivered prisoner from Jerusalem into the hands of the Romans.

18 Who, when they had examined me, would have let me go, because there was no cause of death in me.

19 But when the Jews spake against it, I was constrained to appeal unto Cæsar; not that I had ought to accuse my nation of.

20 For this cause therefore have I called for you, to see you, and to speak with you: because that for the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain.

21 And they said unto him, We neither received letters out of Judæa concerning thee, neither any of the brethren that came shewed or spake any harm of thee.

22 But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that every where it is spoken against.

30 And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him,

31 Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. Arriving in Rome. Acts 28: 11-22. Wonderful, wasn't it, that so far from his former surroundings the apostle should find brethren?

Tuesday. Preaching in Rome. Acts 28: 23-31. Shackled to a succession of Roman guards! That was certainly being handicapped. But he used his bondage as a pulpit (Phil. 1: 13, 14).

Wednesday. A Happy Prisoner. Phil. 1: 12-21. With such a philosophy of life, and where the supreme ambition is to get Christ preached, happiness is but a sequence.

Thursday. Faithfulness Rewarded. 2 Tim. 2: 1-13. You cannot dissociate crown and prize from the life of the Christian, such a contest, battle and race is that life.

Friday. A Message to the Romans. Rom. 1: 1-12. That he was forever praying for them! Folks that he had never seen! Wonderfully inclusive was Paul's Christian love! (Cf. also ver. 14.)

Saturday. Love Fulfilling the Law. Rom. 13: 8-14. Love as a debt, something that should be paid? Why, yes; because only so can we return the love-debt of God in Christ Jesus.

Sunday. The Good Shepherd. Psalm 23. It was no beside-still-waters, through-green-pastures journey that had brought Paul to Rome—but, even so, the Good Shepherd had led him all the way.

At the Threshold

Rome is one of the most distracting cities in the world, it has so many ghosts, and so many centuries and cultures center there. But in Rome the Christian can never forget Paul. When you look down from any one of its many elevations upon ruins and historic structures your eyes turn involuntarily to that quarter, at the foot of the Palatine, where the apostle's "own hired dwelling" must have been.

The Roman Empire was an embodiment of power—"Rome was the whole world and all the world was Rome"—its eagle a symbol of human almightiness. Paul was a little, weak, Jewish man, under arrest; an itinerant missionary of

an insignificant despised sect, whose emblem was a shameful cross. But he was indwelt by the power of the Holy Spirit. Today the sovereignty of Rome is only a remembrance of history; that Eternal City only a museum of antiquities.

Paul's gospel, on the other hand, has conquered the inhabited earth as Rome never did; and everything beautiful and notable in that city is crowned with the same cross in which Paul gloried, which Rome held in such contempt. Looking down upon Rome you think all this. Gentile Rome received the gospel that Jewish Jerusalem rejected; welcomed Jesus' great ambassador whom the Judean city cast out.

The Lesson Before Us

I. "We Came to Rome"

If we think merely of Paul's being taken to Rome as a prisoner of the Empire, we miss the meaning of this part of his life, from his point of view. God is taking him there. It is the fulfilment of his destiny, of his ambition and of the divine plan (23:11). He had preached the gospel in other great cities of the Roman world; the greatest of them all would come next (Acts 19:21; cp. Rom. 1:15).

The journey thither may not have been as he had expected; but Paul was never greatly concerned about the means, about external circumstances, so long as the end he ever had in view was attained: winning men to Christ. Preaching "Jesus and the resurrection" in Jewish synagogue, or rented hall, or public square, or by the shackles that loaded his wrists there at Rome (Rom. 1:12ff.)—it was all one to him, if only the gospel got itself preached. That he could turn misfortune, unpropitious circumstances, bitter opposition, to the gospel's advantage reveals the marvelous genius of the man, as well as his indomitable faith that God works things together to good ends.

The Christian who has such faith will not be forever giving way to discouragement, or giving up in the face of failure, closed doors and other obstacles. Nor will he place undue stress upon methods and machinery; which are liable to break down. We shall be blamable if we do not employ the best available methods and machinery in our religious work; but more important is it that we have, as Paul did, the consciousness of the divine leadership.

Did not the "man of Macedonia"—personification of lost Europe, in dire need of Christ's salvation—*beckon to our apostle from the Imperial City?* Was he not ever leading Paul on and on?—He thought, indeed, of far-distant Spain! —That vision of the beckoning man was backgrounded by his other vision, of the Man of Nazareth; who could answer Europe's, and the world's need; and who had appointed this Paul to be a bearer of his grace to the Gentile nations. The thought of the world's spiritual need overwhelms and depresses us; but not when we think of it in the light of the crucified Jesus.

II. "Perilous Passage Makes Port Pleasant"

We pass over the events of the voyage, the account of which in Acts is one of the most thrilling adventure stories in literature. Its key-thought might be embodied in the angel's assurance, "Fear not, Paul" (Acts 27:24). It was a safe journey, as all the goings to and fro of the saints are, in the sense that our apostle and his companions finally landed safely on Italian soil. One of the pleasant things about Puteoli, the port where they embarked, was that there they found and were heartily welcomed by Christian brethren.

At Puteoli, the modern Pozzuoli, on the Bay of Naples, seventeen piles are still to be seen that supported the ancient dock across which Paul must have walked. Although so far from Rome, about 135 miles, Puteoli had a much better harbor than Ostia, and was rapidly superseding that place as a landing for Roman freight.

They would traverse, on the land journey northward, via Capua, the famous Appian Way, portions of which are still in use. How it must have heartened our apostle to have brethren of the Roman church come all that long way to bid him welcome! Luke voices Paul's appreciation in the short, memorable, splendid sentence—"he thanked God and took courage."

III. "Ambassador in Bonds"

It was the center of the civilized world, the melting-pot of nations and religions, where the gospel would find its largest opportunity. Paul was on the whole a favored prisoner. Yet, following a common practice, he was kept handcuffed to a soldier (Phil. 1:13; Col. 4:18); and this guard was changed at frequent intervals.

The Jews of Rome would, supposedly, be more liberal than those of Jerusalem, and they were curious to hear Paul expound the new faith; but only a few of them seem to have accepted it; the greater number went away arguing about it; and little that avails!

"Every where spoken against" (28:22). Not only had the calumnies of the Jews of Judea been widely disseminated, but in general dark and lying stories about the Christians were in circulation. The Roman author Tacitus, writing at this time, speaks of the gospel as "a detestable superstition, guilty of atrocious and shameful crimes."

A prisoner of state like Paul was allowed many liberties, among others that of living in his own lodgings. The chained soldier would be always there, however! Unable to work any longer at his trade, he would be supported by the brethren of Rome and by those thoughtful, generous friends at Philippi (Phil. 4:14, 18).

The most important item of these closing verses is that throughout the two years he was not denied freedom of teaching. He could not go out to the people, but they came to him. "How all the schemes of the enemies of Paul and Christ had turned out to the furtherance of the gospel! (Phil. 1:12.) They had brought Paul to Rome at the expense of the state—they had given Paul a great audience" (Torrey).

"The word of God is not bound" (2 Tim. 2:9). He enjoyed off and on the society of a number of the men who had been associated with him or who were becoming prominent in the church; besides Luke and Aristarchus, Tychicus, Timothy, Epaphroditus, Mark, Justus, Epaphras, and the backslider Demas. By such intercourse he kept in touch with the churches he had established. During these two years he also probably wrote four of the epistles that we highly prize: Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.

Luke has been telling how Paul brought the good news to Rome. That story accomplished, his book comes to a natural, if abrupt, close. Some have thought that it was his purpose to write a third "treatise" about Christianity's beginnings, but was prevented from doing this by death, or otherwise. A more important and perplexing question is, Did Paul suffer martyrdom at the close of these two years, or was he released, to continue his missionary activities for a time longer, but again to be arrested and put to death at Rome? New Testament scholars are divided in their opinions about it, and probably always will be.

"Thus ended the earthly course of this great teacher of nations, this apostle of victorious faith, of evangelical freedom, of Christian progress. It was the heroic career of a spiritual conqueror of immortal souls for Christ, converting them from the service of sin and Satan to the service of the living God, from the bondage of the law to the freedom of the gospel, and leading them to the fountain of life eternal. . . Saint Paul still remains one of the foremost benefactors of the human race, and the pulses of his mighty heart are beating with stronger force than ever throughout the Christian world" (Philip Schaff).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

Is it wise sometimes just to drift with the tide, rather than strive against it, try to overcome adverse circumstances?

Conan Doyle makes an old sea captain say: "Even when the pilot is aboard, I keep my weather-eye open." Applied to our Pilot, does such an attitude contradict faith?

What other great Christians have preached Christ by their bonds? Or can you think of Christians who have done it in bondage, figuratively speaking?

Much is said about Mark Hopkins at ne end of a log—put Paul at one end f a chain and a Roman soldier at the ther and what will happen during the ong hours of this intimacy?

It may be profitable to take up the utstanding misfortunes of one's life—hat are back in the past—and see in ow many cases they worked for our ood. Of course you must be careful, s a Christian, how you define that word good."

It is obviously foolish to get out of patience with God when things don't go right, when he leads us in dark and dubious ways. How can we help it, taught by Paul?

Are you more firmly resolved since studying this lesson not to let hampering circumstances and the upsets of life interfere with your Christian task of winning men to Christ?

Specify, from Paul's story here in Acts, some of the signal victories of his life.

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Edward Bleakney, Pittsburgh, Pa.

For years it has been my conviction hat the Sunday school teacher, or reacher, should bring to the people efore him a message (1) which appeals o him; (2) which he feels, and (3) hat meets the need of the hour. After ooking over the lesson for today, and he readings for the week leading up to , the message that fulfils the requireents which I have named occurs in aturday's reading: "Love fulfilling the aw." I should, therefore, give most of he time to love.

In Thursday's reading, its thesis is hat faithfulness is rewarded. After all, here is a close connection between love nd faithfulness, or loyalty. Josiah oyce is of the opinion that "love is the nother of all virtues." I should be inined to say that love is the mother of oyalty. Nevertheless, the two are very osely related. Love is proverbially the reatest thing in the world.

Love is the greatest thing in the world, s Henry Drummond and lots of others ave said, because it is not easily proked. It controls its temper. It is not ritable.

Love is the greatest thing in the world ecause it bears abuse. It suffereth long. endureth all things. It is forbearing.

Love is the greatest thing in the world ecause it not only bears abuse, but bears buse *and is kind*. It has a sweet spirit. has what Matthew Arnold calls sweet reasonableness." It is like a bud hich bursts forth into a flower and addens the air.

Love is the greatest thing in the world ecause it is forgiving. It is never rentful. It overlooks faults.

Love is the greatest thing in the world ecause it envieth not. It knows no alousy. It is magnanimous.

Love is the greatest thing in the world ecause it is humble. It make no parade. never brags. It is not conceited.

Love is the greatest thing in the world cause it is not rude. It is always urteous and never unmannerly. Love oth not behave itself unseemly.

Love is the greatest thing in the world cause it is not selfish. It is disinterted. It is not always thinking about itself. Love seeketh not her own, but the interests of others in preference to its own.

Love is the greatest thing in the world because it unites. It bridges chasms. It brings people, groups, classes and nations together. It is the principle of unity.

Love is the greatest thing in the world because it is sympathetic. It possesses otherism. It looks at things from the other person's view-point. It does its best to understand others.

Love is the greatest thing in the world because it never fails. Prophecy passes away, knowledge vanishes, but love abides.

"The night has a thousand eyes,
The day but one,
Yet the light of the whole world dies
With the setting sun.
The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one,
Yet the light of the whole life dies,
When love is done."

Before My Class of Women

Mabel Stevens Burton, McMinnville, Ore.

Some time before Paul visited Rome he wrote to the Christians there a letter from a scholar to scholars. It is the least personal of all his letters, but stands at the head in literary value. In it one finds the confessions of a great soul and the counsel of a great mind. We should read, study, and live the letter to the Romans from Paul the ambassador of Jesus Christ, for it contains most necessary, personal, applied psychology for living in this twentieth century. The closing of this letter gives us a glimpse of some of the friends who met him as he drew near to the great city where he was to make his appeal to Cæsar.

Friendly Contacts

Paul seemed not to care for the magnificent roads or for the glories of architecture of the great buildings. No mention is made of the imperial officers or the hordes of soldiers that must have been traveling the same way. The friends of former days and the new friends gained seemed to take all of his time during the two or more years he lived in his own hired house. Preaching, teaching, writing concerning Jesus Christ consumed his energy. Jews were invited, Gentiles welcomed and coworkers comforted as he stayed at home, because of his Roman guard, but he always spoke with confidence on his great theme.

His courage was infectious as he made contacts with Nero's household or the chief Jews. He was alike to rich and poor, bond and free, Greek and barbarian, men and women. All needed the reconciling message of the cross. Not what he did but what he *was* made him the brave, loyal, friend, trusted and proven. Among these many friends was Phœbe, a servant of the church, who needed assistants in her Christian service. There was also Priscilla, who was a helper, and had a church in her own house. Paul gives especial thanks for her. Mary, who "labored for us"; the household of Narcissus; the mother of Rufus—who also mothered Paul; these are some of the women to whom he delights to give honorable mention. Julia and the sister of Nereus, and Phœbe the trusted letter-carrier, are given equal praise with men. No wonder Paul had so many friends, for he was so generous with his praise of them. What a lesson for us! Life is only rich as it holds a wealth of friendship. Because Paul could say, "I come to you with joy, by the will of God, that I may with you be refreshed," his friendship was of the highest; a give-and-take in blessings.

His ability to be all things to all men that he might by all means save some, made many friends for his Lord. Paul was at his best, as we all are at our best, among friends. He was able to win others to the Christ when friends were helping. What letters of love and gratitude he must have received! The epistles he wrote that have been preserved give many sidelights on his personal friends. Onesimus the slave was a friend, and also the master, Philemon. Timothy, his dear son in the faith, as well as the mother and grandmother, were intimate friends of Paul. Friends from Philippi, Ephesus and Colosse; friends from Galatia, Dalmatia and Crete came and went, but one remained—Luke, the doctor; Paul's guardian and amanuensis. There were many friends at the beginning of his stay in Rome, but at the close "only Luke." Can we picture the older man in chains and the younger one with a pen, as they worked together writing a Gospel for the Gentiles, and again an Acts of the Apostles; until one day the older man goes to meet his best Friend and the younger is left to finish the story.

The world is hungry for friends, and women need consciously to cultivate friends, as Paul did for Jesus Christ. May we, too, have young friends and old; home friends and foreign ones, and as we grow older, more friends because we are becoming more like the "Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Friendly contacts are foundation-stones of the kingdom of God.

Unfriendly Contacts

Not even Christ made friends with all who contacted him. His followers cannot hope to do more than their Master. The stoning and shipwreck, the imprisonments and expulsions, all by unfriendly hands, caused Paul to feel a nearness to Christ as he entered into suffering with him. He said he was a debtor to these unfriendly folks, for the valuable lessons he learned from these hard experiences. His democratic views of human life were not gladly received. A slave and his master, a Jew and a Gentile, sitting together at the Lord's table and singing praises to the same heavenly Father, seemed blasphemy to a sinful, selfish, first-century world—just as it often seems impossible to a twentieth-century world. The salvation of God for all peoples is still a hard doctrine to believe. Obeying the spirit and not just the letter of the law of Christ, still separates friends.

From disappointing friendships and prison experiences have come the rarest literary gems and spiritual comfort. How poverty-stricken would be our Christian lives if we did not have the letters to Timothy, Philemon, the Philippians, the Colossians and the Ephesians! Think of the strength given Christians for many centuries from *Pilgrim's Progress,* another prison product! Those immortal words written on the wall of a French prison prove Paul's contention that love *is* the greatest thing in the world.

"The night has a thousand eyes,
And the day but one,
Yet the light of a whole world dies,
With the setting sun.

"The mind has a thousand eyes,
And the heart but one,
Yet the light of a whole life dies
When love is done."

Many a woman has felt the drudgery of her life to be as prison walls and has said, "Oh, if only I could go as a missionary, or get out and do some service to the world!" Remember that the first great Christian missionary spent the most fruitful years of his life in prison. He let not circumstances master him, but mastered circumstances. No wonder he could say, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." Let us, too, learn that. Women in the home, in the schoolroom, at the desk, behind a counter thank God for every experience!

Paul is still reconciling the old and new, man and God, through Christ Jesus. It is not without cause that today great historic churches in the old and new worlds are named "Saint Paul's." The church where Washington worshiped and the church where Wellington and Nelson are buried are dedicated to our apostle.

We may not have churches named in our honor, but our children and the children of others may rise up and call us blessed—if we can honestly say with Paul, "for me to live is Christ."

Crannellograms

Philip W. Crannell, D. D.

1. Many stages to pass; one goal to gain; the prize—his likeness. 2. When Jesus does such calling, who would not answer with all his might? 3. What different ships God uses to bear his servants to their goals! 4. How differently we Christians get ahead—we "winter," "touch and tarry," find brethren, land, walk to Rome. 5. Paul never lacked courage, but the sight of welcoming brethren gave him more. 6. Both with God and men Paul was a "special." 7. "You wanted Rome; now strike." "I do!" 8. Attack the enemy—to make them friends. 9. My beloved kinsfolk shall have the first chance. 10. My brothers may be stubborn, but they are still my brothers. 11. Tell the truth, tactfully; be tactful truthfully. 12. Chained for my nation's hope, and by that hope set free! 13. Why did they listen: fairness or fear or the Spirit's power? Partly the last, for some believed. 14. Real truth is often most spoken against. 15. Two whole years! Tedious delay! But glorious opportunity. 16. You may call it a Roman prison, or "Paul's own hired house"; it was both. 17. Where there are fish, in prison or in brook, the tireless Paul will fish, by hook or crook. 18. Full of the kingdom? Never still!

"The development of Christianity through Paul was from the seed his Master had planted. What he did was to change Christianity from a Jewish to a world religion by breaking down all barriers and placing it at the head of the highest thought of the ages. And as he labored to preserve the unity of the church—the body of Christ with one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all—so he strove to present the unity of its Head as truly God and also truly man. And so, though dead, he yet speaketh."—*Prof. W. B. Hill.*

Lesson XIII. December 24. A CHRISTIAN CHRISTMAS

Isa. 11: 1-9

General Theme: A VISION OF WORLD PEACE

[This lesson written by Herbert W. Hansen, Scarsdale Community Baptist Church, Scarsdale, N. Y.]

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Isaiah 2: 1-5; Luke 2: 8-20

KEY VERSE: The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.—Isa. 11: 9

1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

3 And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord: and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

4 But with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

5 And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins.

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. A Vision of World Peace. Isa. 11: 1-9. A beautiful picture of the coming Messiah, his characteristics and influence. It is of course figurative and symbolic. God's spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, might and knowledge shall be the spirit of the Christ who shall give the poor and meek a chance. His influence shall be so potent that it will not only redeem human relationships, but affect even the natural realm. What life on earth might be if the spirit of God were regnant!

Tuesday. The Prince of Peace. Isa. 9: 1-7. True peace, righteousness and justice shall come when those who walk in darkness see the great light. A leader shall come whose spirit will be the spirit of God. He shall bring joy such as no

warlike aggressor can bring. Christ is he fulfilment of this dream.

Wednesday. The Covenant of Peace. Ezek. 34:25-31. A lovely picture of God's loving care for men. Through nature he will provide everything necessary for an abundant life, and through his spirit will enrich men's spirits. Most of he troubles of mankind could be done away with if only we had the spirit of God. Do our selfish lives merit the riches of nature and grace that God lavishes upon us?

Thursday. The Bond of Peace. Eph. 2:11-22. Christ the hope of mankind. He enables men to become like himself. Strife is done away with in his kingdom, for his men cannot strive with one another like barbarians. Those who live n his spirit live like friends.

Friday. The Blessings of Peace. Ezek. 36:22-31. God's people need a new heart and new spirit. He suffers when ve do not live true to him. When men see this and learn to live in a godlike fashion, they loathe their sin and selfishness. God has done his part to make his earth like heaven, but have we done ours?

Saturday. Peace on Earth. Luke 2:8-20. The dreams of the prophets came o reality in Jesus. But peace and blessng cannot fully come except as men grow like him. Will this Christmas eason make us more like him? If it loes, we shall be able to change visions of peace and righteousness into living eality.

Sunday. Universal Peace. Isa. 2:1-5. The prophet was confident that universal peace would ultimately obtain, but notice that it is to come about through the establishment over all of "the Lord's house" (ver. 2).

At the Threshold

If there is any day in the year when ecognition and tribute should be paid to person, it would seem as if it would e Jesus' birthday. "A Christian Christmas" is a good subject for our lesson oday, for Christ is sometimes lost in he hurry and bustle of the celebration. We have so commercialized Christmas, nade it so much a Santa Claus Day, nat we sometimes forget what it is all bout. Let us not condemn too severely his commercialization, for it helps make ne day happy, but let us be sure that we ay tribute to Christ and the things of Christ in all our doings.

A beautiful little poem published in *he Chicago Tribune* contrasts modern hristmases with the first Christmas:

"Green-paper holly
And green-paper bills—
Stillness of starlight
And hush of white hills—

"Hustle and hurry
To left and to right—
Wise-men and shepherd-lads
Praying all night—

"Gifts of electric-trains,
Dolls dressed in fur—
Warm breath of ox and ass,
Incense and myrrh—

"Crowded shops, crushing streets.
What do men seek?
There's a child watching,
With tears on his cheek."

There is a place in Christmas for holly, paper-bills, electric-trains, and dolls if the remembrance of Jesus be given first place.

"*If the message of him whose birth we celebrate at Christmas teaches us one thing above all others* it is, not that we shall try to do for him as a person, but that we shall seek to do for one another." —*Edward Bok.*

The Lesson Before Us

I. A Christian Christmas Will Be One Where Good Cheer Is Regnant

The pessimism and gloom of Old Scrooge have nothing in common with the Spirit of Christ. Bob Cratchit, in all his poverty and trouble, was a man of good cheer. It should be frequently pointed out that while Jesus did weep on occasion, he commanded his disciples to "be of good cheer." Jesus did not overemphasize the gloom in his life, but rather lived as a happy, joyous man.

We have been too much weighted down by our ills and misfortunes the last few years. Ahead of us probably lies a long, slow pull up-hill. There will be other discouragements. It doesn't do us any good to grouch about our lot. We need to *grin* and bear it, and not just bear it. We need to laugh and forget our troubles. "Smile, smile, smile!"

This is no plea for the kind of lightheartedness that is flippant. There is something wrong with the person who can look out on the world today and be flippant. But there is a difference between good cheer and flippancy. It was at a time when Jesus had most cause to be worried and down-hearted that he said to those disciples, "Be of good cheer." Good cheer is a way of living that implies courage and a will to victory. It is the spirit that is willing to take the blows of life on the chin.

There is a passage of "In Memoriam," one of the Christmas sections, which should be read in this connection. That poem came out of deep sorrow in the poet's life: the loss, by death, of his bosom friend, Arthur Hallam. In this particular section he tells how he dreaded to see Christmas come around again without his friend. Yet Christmas lightened his spirit and reconciled him to his grief.

"The time draws near the birth of
Christ;
The moon is hid; the night is still;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

"Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound.

"Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and
peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

"This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wish'd no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

"But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controll'd me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with
joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule."

II. A Christian Christmas Will Be One Where the Spirit of Unselfishness Is Regnant

At this season of the year we give more lavishly than at any other time. More of our Christmas giving should be to folks who are worse off than we are. It is a gracious thing to bestow gifts upon our friends, but a finer thing to befriend the poor and friendless.

One of the reasons for believing that people are getting better is this benevolent concern, that we all seem to have, for the unfortunate. The poor and the unemployed were never cared for in any previous depression as they have been during these last few years.

Most of the trouble in the world is from selfishness. At first Old Scrooge was a grasper and tight-fisted. Then something happened to him. He saw his sin; and, after all, sin is nothing but selfishness. When he saw the poverty of his own estate, for all his wealth, a change came over him and he became unselfish and benevolent.

I remember an address that I heard as a boy by a professor of economics on some subject relating to the Christianizing of our social order. The speaker quoted the last stanza of the hymn which we often sing at this season:

"For lo, the days are hastening on,
Foretold by prophets, sage,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the age of gold."

Then he said, "That isn't what we want. We've had the age of gold, and it hasn't brought us happiness. We've had ages when everything we touched, like Midas of fairy lore, turned to gold. But it hasn't brought us peace. I'd like to rewrite that hymn:

"For lo, the days are hastening on,
Foretold by prophets, sage,
When with the ever-circling years
Comes round the golden age."

Yes, that is what we want. That is what the old Greeks longed for. An

age that will be the acme of development and culture in religion and fine living. That is what Plato dreamed of. That is the Utopia of Thomas More, and "the beloved community" of Josiah Royce. That is what Jesus called "The Kingdom of God." When we achieve that golden age by unselfish living

"Then peace shall over all the earth
Its ancient splendors fling,
And the whole world give back the song
Which now the angels sing."

III. A Christian Christmas Will Be One Where the Spirit of Peace and Good-Will Is Regnant

There are only two kinds of people in the world, men of good-will and men of ill-will. None of us fit perfectly into either of those classifications. On occasion we are men of ill-will, some of the time we are men of good-will.

Christianity fails if it does not produce men and nations of good-will. Jesus had an acid test for Christianity. He said in no uncertain terms that a man with a grudge has no right to approach God. Let him leave his sacred gift at the altar and go and be reconciled to his fellow men—then let him come to God. We do not preach that gospel enough today. We think we can be ill-natured, hate our fellows, give the baser passions of our being free rein, and still wear the cloak of Christianity. Ostrich-like we imagine that no one will be the wiser.

But everyone is wiser. We fool no one but ourselves. We may cry, "Lord, Lord," until we are hoarse, but it will do us no good while our hearts are seared with bitterness. If there were any panacea that could banish selfishness and ill-will from every human heart, the golden age would be "just around the corner."

War, which is nothing more or less than national ill-will, is the greatest threat to everything that is high and fine. The total cost in money of the World War was about two-thirds the total wealth of the United States. Millions of men died or were maimed. In that war we lost all sense of moral values. Was it not the greatest loss of all?

A nation cannot have everything. If it gives itself to war, it will lose out in other respects. Sparta specialized in the art of war and that is all we remember her for. In contrast, Athens found time to produce Socrates, Aristophanes, Sophocles, and Plato. During the Roman conquest of Greece, Milton tells us:

The repeated air
Of sad Electra's poet had the power
To save the Athenian walls from ruin bare.

At a later day when the Goths came down (we usually think of them as "vandals") they destroyed Sparta, but spared Athens because of her wonderful intellectual past. There are other ways than conquest for a nation to make itself famous.

Newton D. Baker recalls that in 1917, when he was secretary of war, he said to General Bliss, "How long will this war last?" The general thought a moment, then replied, "Oh, about thirty years, Mr. Secretary." Mr. Baker says he replied in astonishment, "Well, surely, general, you do not mean that this slaughter is going on for thirty years? The race couldn't stand that!" Bliss answered, "No, Mr. Secretary, I do not mean that the killing phase of the war will last that long, but I do mean that the economic strain, the economic ambitions, the racial hatreds, and the unsatisfied revenges will take new forms of conflict, and it will be perhaps thirty years before the consequences of this World War are all fought out."

Many of us now agree with George Bernard Shaw who did not agree with him when he first said it: "The only one who came out of the war with an enhanced reputation was Jesus."

IV. The Christmas Spirit Is the Spirit of Christ

It is the spirit of good-cheer, unselfishness, peace and love. We are all at our best at this season of the year because its sentimental warmth makes us more like Christ. He was never selfish and he had no malice. He went about doing good, seeking in humility of spirit to be a blessing to those about him. Paul said, "They who have not the spirit of Christ are none of his." All the world is more Christlike on Christmas Day. We ought to be glad for that. If only the Christmas spirit could carry through all the year! A Merry, Merry Christmas, then, and "as Tiny Tim observed, 'God bless us, every one.'"

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

If it is a few men who decide whether a nation is to have peace or go to war, what do mass movements for peace accomplish?

Should the United States join the League of Nations? Should it join the World Court?

Are international treaties "scraps of paper" in times of war?

Is Japan or China in the right in the Sino-Japanese trouble?

Should those of us who believe in peace take an oath that we will under no circumstances fight? Can we do this as good patriots?

Is military preparedness the best guarantee of peace?

Should we have compulsory or voluntary military training in high schools? In colleges and universities?

Do international athletics like the Olympic Games make for international understanding and thus serve the cause of peace?

Suggestions for the Day

1. There are a number of Christmas poems that might well be read in the worship session of the church school, or in the class period, this Sunday: Joyce Kilmer's "Gates and Doors"; Vachel Lindsay's "Star of My Heart"; and Francis M. Gostling's "No Candle Was There and No Fire."

2. The following subjects might be assigned beforehand for essays or individual discussions: "What Christ Has Done for the World"; "The Contribution of Christmas Music"; "Some Christmas Stories that We All Love"; "Giving Ourselves with Our Gifts"; "The Gifts of God to Us."

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Edward Bleakney, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Prof. William Ernest Hocking, of Harvard University, said one day in class that "the forces for division are stronger than those for unity." I do not know whether this statement is true, but I do know that there are a great many dividing forces in the world today—many forces, for instance, which make for war instead of peace.

Nationalism is one. When sane, it is a good thing, but when extreme, it tends to divide. A narrow and self-seeking nationalism makes for war.

Tariffs divide. They do not conduce to unity. A professor of economics told me recently that he believes that "in the future in discussing tariffs we shall use this argument more and more, rather than the economic argument."

War debts make for ill-will. Many Europeans have a feeling against us, bordering on hatred, because of their debt obligations to this country. We believe that an all-round reduction or cancellation of the intergovernmental war debts would foster mutual good-will and confidence, aid economic recovery, and promote enduring peace.

We have pointed out some of the forces which divide the world and make for war; what are those which make for peace?

All international associations contribute to good-will, the international labor organizations; the International Advertising Club; the International Rotary Club; the World Student Federation, and many others which could be named.

Education is a force for peace. It plants the right seeds for good-will, which need to be planted.

The League of Nations, with its fifty-six members, is a force for peace. It is not so strong as it would be if our country were in it. We are closely asso-

ciated with the League. That we soon may be in it, is the prayer of a great many.

The World Court, with its forty-five members, is a force for peace. As yet we are out of it. All makers of peace should do their best to secure American entrance into this Court, immediately.

Another great force for peace is the Kellogg-Briand Peace Pact, by which fifty-eight nations have renounced war as an instrument of national policy and have pledged themselves to use only the methods of peace in seeking the settlement of difficulties.

Travel makes for peace. It works for good-will because the traveler gets the point of view of other nations and becomes more sympathetic toward other people and their problems.

One of the greatest forces for international good-will is religion. Dr. William P. Merrill says that "the conviction is steadily gaining power that religion alone can end war." Its principles of brotherhood, forgiveness and love tend to unite. The doctrine of the kingdom of God, which teaches that all men are brothers through a common Father, is a strong force for world brotherhood.

We are making great progress. Let us keep up the fight. As President Hoover said in one of his Armistice Day addresses: "We must wage peace, as men have waged war." Let us consider ourselves not only citizens of our own country but citizens of the world. Develop the international mind! Think internationally! Cursed are those who pull people apart; but blessed are they who bridge chasms between groups and nations, who bring people together. Or in the Master's own words, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

Before My Class of Women

Mabel Stevens Burton, McMinnville, Ore.

VISION OF WORLD PEACE

Without vision the people perish. How can women help bring about a realization of the vision of world peace? We say rather glibly, "Not until the Prince of Peace is enthroned in the hearts of men everywhere, shall we have world peace." Let us realize fully that the vision for peace must become a reality in the hearts of the young and that women have the larger share in influencing youth. The prophet said, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children." If it is a true saying that God could not be everywhere, *so made mothers,* then mothers must teach peace, train for peace and most of all, live peace.

Christian women must realize that according to the Christian gospel: (1) War is a denial of God as our heavenly Father. How can one say "Our Father," when hate is breeding and plans are being made to kill fellow men? (2) War is a denial of Christ's view of man. Jesus taught the supreme worth of the individual. War contends that man is only "cannon fodder," and of no moral worth—during a war! (3) War is a denial of Christ and his redemptive love. Love may at times be stern and hard, but its aim is always good-will, higher welfare and redemption. Love suffers long and is kind; it goes the "second mile," and overcomes evil with good. Jesus came to save and not to destroy.

We need to realize that war is a symptom of the great disease of sin and selfishness. We must attack this disease and treat it like any other sin. After years of victories and defeats, the sin of slavery has been nearly wiped out. The sin of prostitution has taken its toll of millions of lives, but today Christian people will not countenance the practice. So "war must be destroyed or war will destroy us."

The cure for sin is Jesus Christ, and a great call goes out for modern Florence Nightingales to leave ease, comfort, perhaps home and loved ones, carrying a lamp of righteousness and peace to heal broken hearts, bring about better understanding between nations and in Christ's name reconcile men to the God of Peace. Do your children think of peace when they think of home and mother? A child who has a rested body and quiet times with loving thoughts is being trained in a way of peace. A child whose trust in God dispels fear and whose kindly thoughts give consideration always to others is on the road toward peace. A child who comes really to know Jesus will find it difficult to walk in a path away from him.

Do boys and girls think of peace when they think of a dearly loved and respected teacher? Lessons from history, in church or public school, can exalt war or peace. The teacher can put the emphasis where she will. There are many moral equivalents for war that may be presented to the older youth. Competitive games and exploration into new realms of thought and nature are often more satisfactory than the thought of war adventure. The untried fields of good-will are challenging our young people and new kinds of occupations are opening to those who have turned their backs on the old ways of hate and greed. Essays, orations and debates are popular ways of creating public sentiment for peace. Stories, poems and plays help those who participate in the giving and those who listen in the receiving. The radio and movies need to be persuaded to give more peace propaganda.

Women need definitely to see to it that intelligent, inspiring programs are given regularly in church and community organizations and that the best authoritative literature is circulated and read by fellow members, neighbors and friends. An added emphasis is being given these days by Peace Schools for boys and girls, and Peace Caravans of young people are going out to neighboring schools and churches. Material for all of these things can be obtained through our own denominational agencies. "What is worth doing, is worth doing well." Let us then pay the price of planning and producing the message of peace in the very best way for the sake of our Master, who will honor every earnest effort to bring on the kingdom of Peace.

Crannellograms

Philip W. Crannell, D. D.

1. A world full of Jehovah's knowledge is a world full of Jehovah's eternal life. 2. Unlike sea-water, the water of life is ever fresh and pure. 3. The Shoot of Jesse is the world's salvation, because he is the Son of God. 4. Jehovah's Spirit is and gives the spirit of wisdom. 5. The world was made by Personality, for personality, and one Personality ruling the many will save the world. 6. When Jesus judges, all judgment is right. 7. The world's one hope is the sway of Jesus' love. 8. The true judge and ruler both punishes and protects. 9. Strength needs a girdle; power needs restraint, righteousness and faithfulness. 10. World-peace will come with world-justice. 11. World-justice must be animated by world good-will. 12. World good-will will be an outcome of Jesus' love and life. 13. Jesus' life and love indwell those only who have been born again. 14. World-transformation will come by elimination: taking ferocity out of human wolves, cunning out of human leopards, brutality out of human lions, malice out of human snakes—miracles which only Christ can work! 15. The child leads! 16. This world "God's holy hill"? By and by!

The Lesson Lived

Susanna G. Fisher

PEACE

A little child shall lead them (Isa. 11:6).

What was the first prophetic word that rang
When down the starry sky the angels sang,
That night they came as envoys of the birth—
What word but peace, "peace and good will on earth?"
And what was the last word the Master said
That parting night when they broke brother bread,
That night he knew men would not let him live—
Oh, what but "peace I leave" and "peace I give?"
And yet, behold, near twice a thousand years
And still the battle-wrath, the grief, the tears.
Let mercy speed the hour when swords shall cease,
And man cry back to God, "There shall be peace."—*Edwin Markham.*

Lesson XIV. December 31. OUR DEBT TO PAUL

Phil. 3: 1-14

General Theme: THE LIFE OF PAUL

Prepared by Mitchell Bronk, D. D.

Devotional Reading for the Opening Service: Psalm 1

KEY VERSE: I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith.—2 Tim. 4: 7

1 Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.

2 Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision.

3 For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.

4 Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more:

5 Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee;

6 Concerning z e a l, persecuting the c h u r c h; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.

7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

A Bible Message for Every Day

Monday. The Life of Paul. Phil. 3: 1-14. This splendid confession should be read in the light of Paul's one ambition, to win men to Christ. To this end he would know that Christ's power and the fellowship of his suffering.

Tuesday. Paul's Conversion. Acts 9: 1-12. The immense results of his life must be traced to an adequate cause. Shall we say that a veritable spiritual earthquake shook him out of his old self into a new man, in Christ Jesus?

Wednesday. Paul the Missionary. Acts 13: 1-7. Apostle means missionary, and both the words signify "one sent." Christ was forever sending forth those whom he called. Every Christian is an apostle and therefore a missionary.

Thursday. Preaching in Prison. Acts 16: 25-31. Whenever the devil tried to interfere with Paul's work he helped it along. With Paul's spirit and gumption you can make untoward circumstances toward—for Christ.

Friday. Exhortation to Unity. 1 Cor. 1: 10-18. Paul had lots of common sense —which told him that only in unity is there strength. And if it was to be a Christian warfare in which they were engaged—in Christ, for peace or conflict, men are one.

Saturday. Praying for Friends. Eph. 3: 14-21. There are few things that bring to one greater peace and confidence than the knowledge that there are those who for you are bowing the knee unto the Father in Christ's name.

Sunday. Blessings of the Righteous. Ps. 1: 1-6. A part of the uplift of Jesus is his raising — revaluation — of values. "Blessing," in the Old Testament sense, becomes something different; and especially "blessing" as understood by the world.

At the Threshold

The apostle Paul is one of the best-known characters of antiquity; certainly of the Bible. For several reasons: We have a wonderful story about him (Acts) written by his intimate friend and companion Luke. We have a lot of his personal correspondence; and letters reveal personality, character, better than any other form of writing. Really to see Paul in his letters, however, one must take them for what they are—not essays; not theological treatises; but actual letters, written (in this case dictated?) to real people, about matters of interest to him and them. Finally, Paul's sphere of activity was mostly that Mediterranean world with which we are well acquainted through the classics.

Paul's personal appearance. One of the books of the Apocryphal Old Testament, "The Acts of Paul and Thecla," which was probably written at Iconium in the first half of the second century, gives a description of Paul which is evidently true in a traditional sense. It reads: "And he went along the road to Lystra, and stood waiting for him, and kept looking at the passers-by according to the description of Titus. And he saw Paul coming, a man small in size, bald-headed, bandy-legged, well-built (square-shouldered?), with eyebrows meeting, rather long-nosed, full of grace; for sometimes he seemed like a man, and sometimes he had the countenance of an angel."

As a Christian missionary, moving from place to place, and exposed to all sorts of hardship and persecution, he felt it his duty to abide alone. He sacrificed the blessings of home and family to the advançement of the kingdom of Christ. This aspect of Paul's life Frederick William Henry Myers brings out beautifully in his lines:

Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you;
Aye, for me, too, he greatly hath sufficed;
Lo, with no winning words I would entice you;
Paul has no honor and no friend but Christ.

Yes, without cheer of sister or of daughter—
Yes, without stay of father or of son,
Lone on the land, and homeless on the water,
Pass I in patience till the work be done.

Yet not in solitude, if Christ anear me
Waketh him workers for the great employ;
Oh, not in solitude, if souls that hear me
Catch from my joyance the surprise of joy.

The Lesson Before Us

While this is not designated a Review Lesson it may be used to recapitulate some of the things that contributed to the apostle's greatness. Of course there were outward circumstances that should be taken into account; such as the advantage of belonging to several nations, or civilizations (in a certain sense a Roman and a Greek, as well as a Jew) and of speaking three widely diffused languages (Greek, Latin, and Aramaic). Of greatest import was the remarkable conversion experience. It turned Saul straight about in his tracks and was the impulse that sent him, Paul, on into a life of enthusiastic devotion to the Nazarene whom he had been persecuting.

While it is ridiculous to say that Paul created Christianity out of the life and teachings of Jesus, it is nevertheless true that he was profoundly influential in molding the beginnings of Christian doctrine and practice into a coordinated gospel and church. When Pfleiderer repre-

sents Jesus by a brilliant, snow-clad, heaven-piercing mountain, he makes Paul loftiest of the lesser peaks of the surrounding range.

The four things that in particular marked the Christian life of the apostle Paul were: Faith, Positiveness, Consecration, Efficiency. Are they not traits that distinguish any great and true Christian?—and that is what we should all aspire to be.

I. Paul's Faith

The word faith has everlastingly associated itself with his name. We call him "the apostle of faith." We read faith in every line of his writings. He does not hesitate to admit that he has apprehended Jesus in faith, as the others had by personal contact, association. The question whether or not Paul had seen Jesus in the flesh does not interest us. If he had, it had meant little or nothing to him. It was the Jesus of his Damascus-gate vision who had blinded and won him.

When he maintains that he had thus seen Jesus, more really, more vividly than the Twelve had, he passes on to us the assurance, so amazing and precious, that you and I can likewise in faith come face to face with the Saviour. This makes Paul a mystic, indeed; but every believing Christian is of necessity such a mystic. "Faith means we are . . . convinced of what we do not see" (Heb. 11:1).

II. Paul's Positiveness

That is, his faith was very positive. Faith doesn't amount to much unless it is. Paul's faith was of the kind that wrings knowledge out of belief. We think of some of his tremendous asseverations: "I *know* whom I have *fully* believed, and I am thoroughly persuaded, etc." (2 Tim. 1:12, Mrs. Montgomery). "I am Jesus' man, let me alone!" (Gal. 6:17). He fairly lives in an atmosphere of Christ—you cannot get him out of it.

But Paul's remarkable faith-conviction is evidenced more by contact than in words: A man doesn't do and bear to the limit for a cause or a person, as Paul did for the gospel and Christ, unless he believes in them to the limit.

III. Paul's Consecration

We are prone to rob this word of its force. You may not take out of it the associations of the altar, of sacrifice, the religiously consecrated thing. And Paul had assuredly offered, devoted, himself to Christ. The service he is rendering the gospel he looks upon as "a thing devoted" (2 Tim. 4:6), and life itself will be if it is asked of him (Phil. 2:17). In a beautiful figure he calls himself indeed the fragrance of an offering (2 Cor. 2:14, 15).

Elsewhere he confesses himself to have passed into the master-ownership of Christ: "I have been captured by Jesus Christ" (Phil. 3:12); or he has been "bought" by Christ (all the redeemed are; 1 Cor. 6:20). Paul is continually referring to himself as a bond-slave, or bond-servant, of Christ.

IV. Paul's Efficiency

This unbounded, assertive faith, this deep realization of God in Christ, and his utter surrender to Christ did not land Paul in fanaticism or lead him into a selfish, useless life of devotion. They did not evaporate in emotion and ecstasy. He was a mystic, but at the same time a live, untiring worker for his Lord.

We feel that appreciation and gratitude for all that has been done for him are back of this enthusiasm for service. Such a saving as his can scarcely be requited; but he will do the best he can. The debt that he owes the Crucified for redeeming him has been transferred to Greeks and barbarians, wise and foolish, men at Rome and everywhere (Rom. 1:14).

A mechanic in those days needed to be industrious to make a living, and Paul the tent-maker carried his industry over into his religious work: one of the church's workmen of whom she decidedly is not ashamed (2 Tim. 2:15). He may not feel himself efficient in this missionary, evangelistic business, but remembers that he is after all but a coworker, and that the cooperating Lord will supply skill and strength (2 Cor. 12:9).

Practical Questions for Class Discussion

Remember first of all that we are studying a *man.* That title Saint ("Saint Paul") sometimes placed before his name has caused many people to lose sight of their own possibilities as studied in the light of his life.

How may we suppose Paul passed the years from the time of his conversion until Barnabas brought him down to Antioch? Does even the most striking conversion fit a man for effective evangelistic work?

What kept Paul from losing the force of the impetus of his conversion experience—and what would be the lesson here for us?

What suggestions does Saul-Paul offer us as to how one's life's former misdirection may be diverted into righteous, godly, channels?

We say that Jesus is the one perfect Bible character. What traits or actions of Paul's should the Christian avoid—take warning from?

TEACHERS' HELPS

In the Men's Class

Edward Bleakney, Pittsburgh, Pa.

In preparing this lesson, my attention was directed to the reading suggested for Friday and the exhortation to unity. In view of the fact that this is one of the greatest needs of our day, I should give most attention to it.

One of the potent forces for unity is the Christian religion. In religion there is unity.

Religion unites. We must admit that it also divides; witness Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Shintoism and the many others. Christianity has three branches: Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant. Religion causes divisions of the religious and non-religious group. Religion divides since it deals with the infinite which is difficult for any person fully to grasp. Religion also divides because it enjoins certain things and forbids others. It insists on clear-cut divisions. It led Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees, and Luther to say, "I can do no other." Religion divides, yes, but it is more of a force for than for division.

Religion unites oneself. The most serious warfare exists in one's inner life. There are warring tendencies within us all. Man finds it impossible of himself to be what he should: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." There is a great chasm between what a man wants to be and what he is. Religion, however, tends to unify the personality, to pull one together, to coordinate the self.

Religion unites us with our fellow men. It brings people together. One of the main principles of Christ was the solidarity of the human family. Through the teachings of the fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, love and forgiveness, the Christian religion tends to unite.

Religion brings unity in families. There are few divorces in homes that are based upon and permeated by true religion. The main reason why divorces are increasing is because religion in the home is decreasing. Say: "Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house, we will serve God," and there will be no divorces.

Religion will bring groups and classes together. It will unite the masses together; it will unite capital and labor; it will unite the races—white, black, and yellow; it will unite nations. Christian missions have been a prominent force for good-will. The great doctrine of the kingdom of God, which teaches that all men are brothers through a common Father, regardless of race, creed, and color, is a mighty force for world brotherhood. The world may set up its machinery for peace, but religion must supply the sentiment, the spirit, the moral and spiritual force.

Religion will bring our churches together. In the face of the present economic depression, we should give more attention to comity. Now is the time to

unite or federate the small churches, to save over-lapping, and wasting the Lord's money.

I urge you to be apostles of unity. Let us pray for it, talk more about it, and keep up the fight for it.

Before My Class of Women

Mabel Stevens Burton, McMinnville, Ore.

I. The Life of Paul for a Modern World

Paul was a many-sided figure, but masterful, and modern. His letters are the log of an explorer, full of colorful incidents. He was an adventurer across an uncharted sea of human sin and hope. At the time of his conversion, Christianity was merely a Jewish sect, but at his death it had become a world religion. Paul, at the feet of Jesus, is certainly one of the most striking spectacles to be seen in history—a great personality lost in a greater Personality. His native lordliness and his acquired lowliness gave him the ability to make Christianity a powerful and practical universal religion.

Three types of civilization were written on the cross of Christ, but they are also written on the life of Paul. By training and experience he knew the life of his day, and became a great emancipator of it, a wise and fearless counsellor for the practical problems of perplexed and misguided lives. The moral degradation of Paul's time is comparable to that of our age; and he shows a way out for us also. With his feet on the ground and his eyes on the stars he was able to make his vision balance the facts. He contended that belief in Christ and his teachings should result in Christlike behavior. Despite his "thorn," he constantly tried to practise what he preached. His healthy-minded morality and convincing courage gave his tactful teaching a perennial pertinence that has a twentieth-century atmosphere.

Tennyson's words might well be the motto of Paul—Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control.

These three alone lead life to sovereign power. When Paul says, "Examine, try, prove your own selves"; when he tells us our body is a temple for the spirit of God; when he talks of overcoming evil with good, we are reminded of modern teachers and wonder why we have not been giving more attention to Paul's words, to help us solve our modern problems.

II. The Life of Paul for a Modern Woman

Paul had many friends. Luke names sixty, and twenty more are mentioned in Paul's letters. These friends include masters and slaves, Gentiles and Jews, soldiers and statesmen, traders and scholars, at least one physician, and many women. The first recorded convert on European soil was a woman. He speaks of the "chief women," and the "women who labored with me in the gospel." He mentions many women by name: Mary and Julia, Phœbe, Priscilla, the mother of Rufus and sister of Nereus. Many authorities claim that Priscilla wrote the book of Hebrews, but because of the position of woman, her name had to be withheld.

Paul lived in a world where women were of little worth, and while he contended that there is neither male or female in Christ Jesus, he held no brief for tactless inattention to decorum or crude display of freedom. He used the voice of wisdom not the voice of prejudice; for concerning himself he said, "All things are lawful, but not all things are expedient." Too often Paul's attitude toward women has been grossly exaggerated and greatly misunderstood. He was talking of the woman problem of his day, and accordingly exhorted women to customs of that day, for the sake of the cause of Jesus Christ. Paul cared most for reality of life, even above consistency. What woman, who has honestly studied the life of Paul, has not been challenged in her daily living by his brave yet humble attitudes, his contention for freedom, yet his willingness to be a slave for Christ's sake, his ability to command, and yet when necessary, obey, his constant finding of life by losing it?

Let us, as women, study Paul's modern, constructive principles of daily living and we shall have less need for spending our time and money on those who are constantly bidding us to come and learn through them how to be happy and charming, how to have pose and personality, and how to become attractive and alluring. Paul can teach us the permanent principles of Christlike living, the principles of individual liberty and social responsibility.

1. *For individual liberty.* He rings the changes on freedom from external prescriptions and emancipation from rites and ceremonies, rituals and useless customs. He taught that one with God is a majority, and that love is the greatest attribute of all.

2. *In social responsibility.* He taught that perfect freedom is found in service to others, the dedication of self-control for others. "We are members one of another," sounds extremely modern—*not passive renunciation but active domination of the world in which he live,* sounds like Jane Addams or Catherine Booth. God grant that Christian women of today may learn from Paul how to become practical and prayerful, confident and joyful, courageous and thankful, and say with him, "for me to live is Christ."

III. The Life of Paul for Modern Missionaries

A missionary of the first century, as one of the twentieth, needs much the same training. Paul had the ability tactfully to meet all kinds of people with disarming courtesy. He was able to approach every situation without fear or frailty, helping the weak with sympathy and meeting the strong with power. He was completely dedicated to serving others, reaching out to the last man, being all things to all men that he might by all means save some. His personal relationship with Christ and loyalty to him made a working faith that carried this first great missionary to the end of the "good fight."

Because Paul had so many controversies about logic and life, form and content, letter and spirit, he became tolerant and cosmopolitan. It was the spirit of cosmopolitanism and spiritualization in the religion of the Jesus that Paul made prominent, causing the universalization of the new faith. "We work together in God's service," Paul said, thinking of the other followers of Christ. The message that turned the world upside down in the first century will do it in the twentieth, if made the daily religion of modern Pauls.

A few words that Paul used often should have great meaning for modern Christians: *Faith,* not a way of talking, but a way of walking; a spiritual point of contact. *Grace,* meets faith and the contact makes power—another Pauline word. And always Paul brings the test of faith at the end of which is peace. There may be conflicts of body and will, but there will be peace at last; there may be great restlessness, but to a slave of Jesus Christ there will be an outward evidence of an inward religious sanity and peace.

Paul would have all workers live as though Christ still broke bread with them, having a "faith acting through love," and the fruits of the spirit constantly being exhibited. Many a modern missionary has been cheered and strengthened as he labored among alien faiths and unresponsive hearers, by the sense of the companionship of Paul.

Crannellograms

Philip W. Crannell, D. D.

1. Paul fought *a* good fight; or rather *the* good fight. 2. God laid out Paul's course; Paul finished it. 3. Paul kept faith, with the faith, by faith. 4. This Pharisee never lost pride; Jesus transformed it into pride in Him. 5. Conversion is a complete turn-about; it makes a new man, not another man. 6. Racial problems are as manifold as races. So is their solution—Christ. 7. We owe the gospel to the world—because we owe ourselves to Christ. 8. Personal liberty: liberty to be a person and so live that every other person can be free. 9. We will hear the voice of the church when in it we hear the voice of God. 10. World peace will come when the gospel disregards continents. 11. He who fails to seek God fails in life's chief duty; he who fails to find Him misses life's crown. 12. Church and world one—in love for the one Lover. 13. The faith that has no conflicts, clearly with no wrong conflicts.

A Worship Program for the Church School

Prepared by REV. GEORGE L. CUTTON
New York State Director of Christian Education

Christian worship may be defined as the realization of the presence of our heavenly Father. The purpose of the church school worship program, then, should be to lead teachers and pupils into a real fellowship with God through Jesus Christ, our Saviour. Such a program should have a unity of materials about some central theme. This means preparation on the part of the superintendent or leader of worship. The following is, therefore, suggestive to such a leader in the building of his own worship programs. He should also consult articles on worship in the ADULT LEADER and the *International Journal of Religious Education.*

As the International (Uniform) Lessons for this quarter are on the life and work of Paul, it is worth our while to choose themes relating Paul's life and work to the modern missionary enterprise. This emphasis is greatly needed just now.

I. PRELUDE. Usually the pianist plays through the first hymn before it is announced from the platform.

II. OPENING HYMN. Following the singing of the opening hymn, the leader of worship may devote some time to the interpretation and memorization of some of the hymns suggested for this quarter. A very good booklet for this purpose is *Great Hymns of Worship and Missions,* by Charles A. Boyd.[1]

The following hymns are suggested for the quarter:

1. Missionary Hymns: "Jesus Shall Reign Where'er the Sun"; "O Zion, Haste, Thy Mission High Fulfilling"; "We've a Story to Tell to the Nations"; "Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life"; "Follow the Gleam" (a song of the World Wide Guild); "The King's Business" (the Royal Ambassador song); "Rescue the Perishing."
2. Hymns of World Peace, with reference to Armistice Day: "Lead On, O King Eternal"; "America, the Beautiful."
3. Thanksgiving Hymns: "When Thy Heart with Joy O'erflowing"; "Now Thank We All Our God."
4. Christmas Hymns: "It Came Upon the Midnight Clear"; "Watchman, Tell Us of the Night."
5. Hymns of Consecration for Teachers and Pupils: "O Master Workman of the Race"; "I Would Be True" (Howard Walter's poem, sent as a Christmas present from a mission field in India to his mother); "Lord, Speak to Me, that I May Speak," a teacher's prayer; "Jesus Calls Us O'er the Tumult."
6. Hymns referring to the Life of Paul: "Almost Persuaded, Now to Believe"; "I Know in Whom I Have Believed."

III. THE SCRIPTURE. The selection read should be appropriate to the theme of the lesson. If the main school is accustomed to the responsive reading of the Uniform Lesson for the day, it is suggested that the leader of worship prepare a number of the Golden Texts as mottoes. Posters might be made for display, or the text could be written on the blackboard. Here are a few from the lessons of the quarter:

October 15. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel."
October 29. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor."
November 5. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."
November 12. "Believe on the Lord Jesus and thou shalt be saved."
November 26. "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ."
December 17. "I press on toward the goal, unto the prize . . . in Christ Jesus."
December 31. "I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith."

IV. WORSHIP TALK OR STORY. In this connection the missionary anniversary programs for worship services in Baptist Sunday schools can be used. They consist of twelve programs, in addition to portraits and great sayings of twelve missionary heroes.[1]

V. PRAYER—as the high point of worship in this service.

VI. HYMN OF DEDICATION to study and service. This can be followed by music as the recessional to the classes. Usually the offering is taken up in the classes.

VII. CLOSING SESSION. If the school reassembles for a closing session, this is the time for the reports of secretaries, the announcements for the week, the superintendent's comments, prayer, and benediction.

[1] May be secured from our Philadelphia headquarters.

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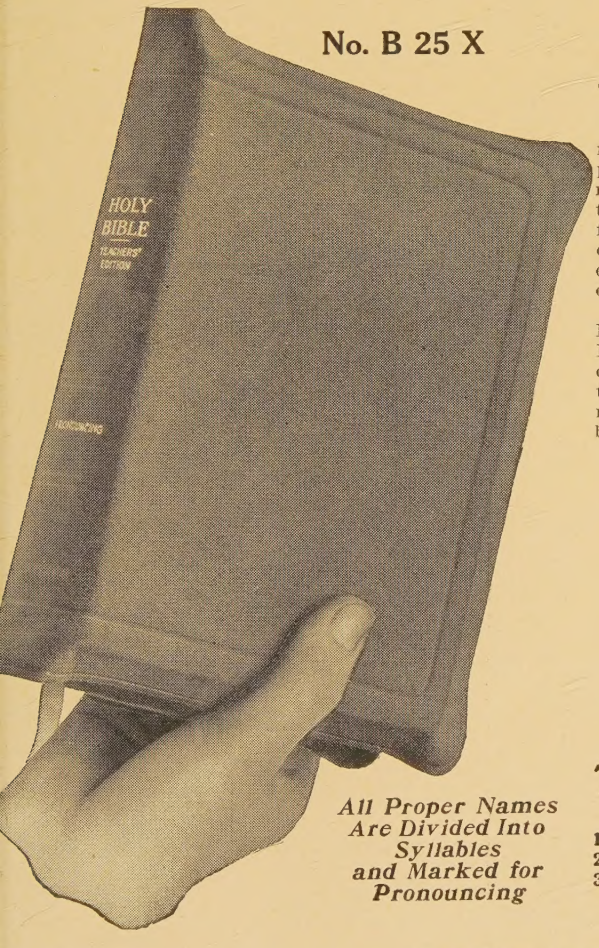

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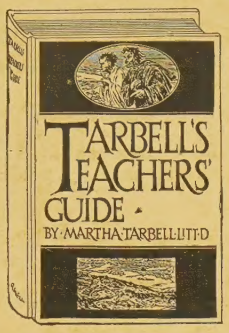

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